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CRONENBERG
Rises from
the DEAD
ZONE!
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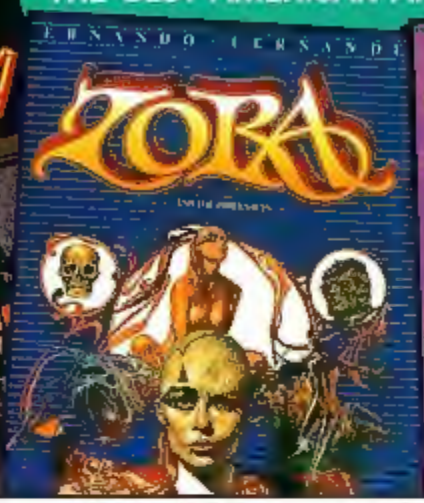

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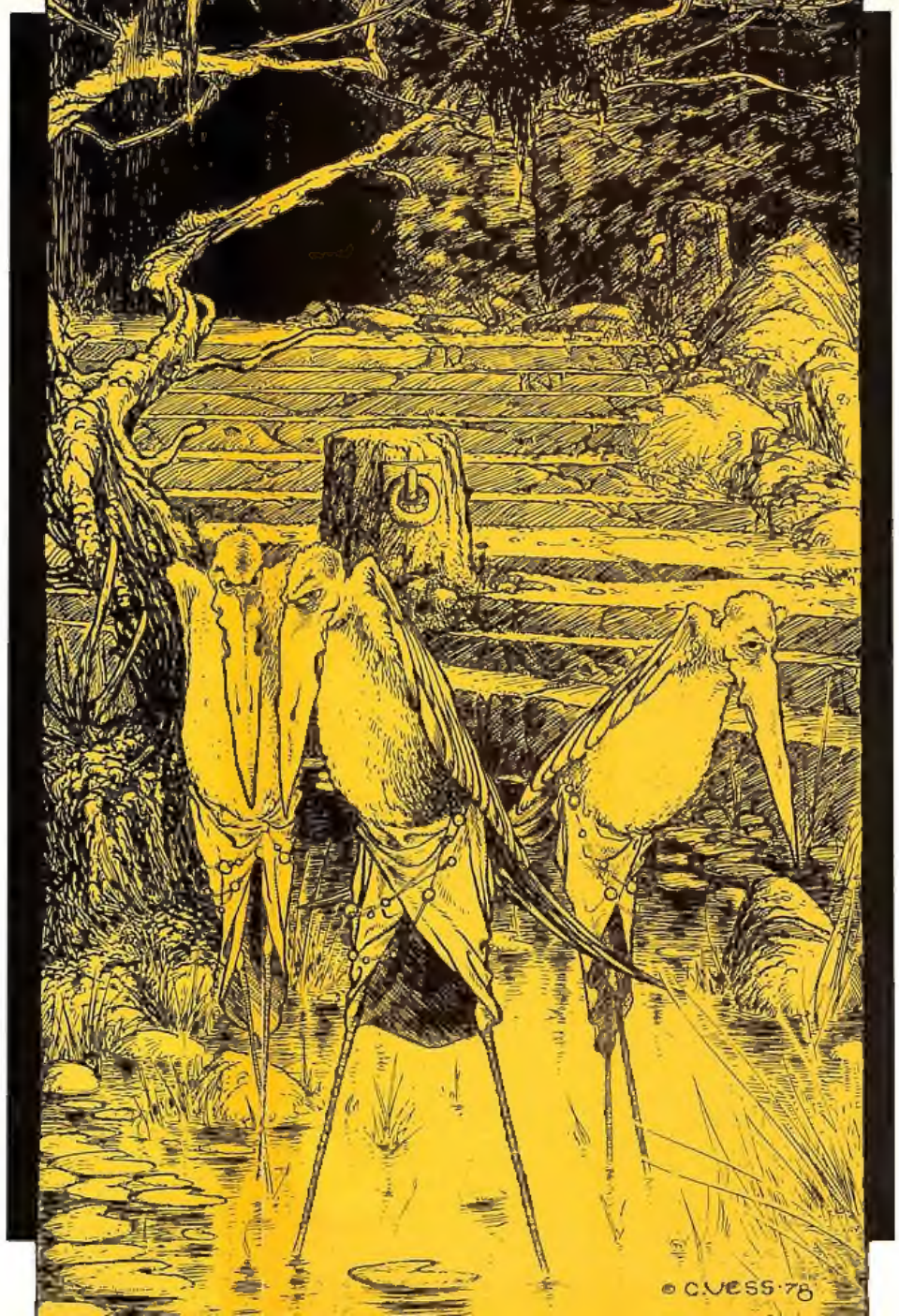

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DOSSIER

Besson: "Words actually inhibit imagination, because they describe too much."

Director Luc Besson: "Wanna make somethin' of it?"
Photo by Robin Holland

COOL HAND LUC

With his directorial debut, ***Le Dernier Combat***, a low budget post-apocalyptic fantasy shot in black and white, wide screen and Dolby Stereo, a twenty-five year-old French filmmaker named **Luc Besson** established himself as his country's most promising talent. The film, a spare yet elaborate account of survival, solitude and savagery among individuals who seldom forge a semblance of human rapport, manages to convey the horror and the exhilaration of such experiences without a word of dialogue. With precise, consistent images and stylistic restraint, *Le Dernier Combat* manifests its author's determination not to emulate such thematically similar but more action-adventure oriented films as *The Road Warrior* and *Mad Max*.

In person, Besson—who's overweight and innocent-eyed—looks like a kid rather than a hot-shot director. His manner and apparel are equally casual, and he can't help but manifest a timidity that makes him seem cautious. His voice is soft, his gestures restrained. He tends not to volunteer personal information, but when pushed into a corner, he doesn't fight back. Clearly, his creative vision is still in its formative stage, and one may speculate that in his personal life, too, he is still evolving. At times, he seems to send a mute signal to his wife, editor Sophie Schmit, who's exceedingly slim, and she hastens to the rescue. It's a rapport that is more visceral than verbal, a mute communication system that one discovers in *Le Dernier Combat*.

Besson—currently preparing his second film, ***Subway***, a thrilling love story starring Isabelle Adjani and Christopher Lambert (*Greystoke*)—worked as an assistant to such directors as Maurice Pialat and Claude Faraldo before taking the plunge. Previously, however, he invented stories for many comics published by *Metal Hurlant* in France. "That way," says Besson, "I was actually writing more expensive films than I could hope to make. There was no limit. The animator could draw a few images that would cost millions of dollars . . ."

—Dan Yakir

NM: How would you define the influence of comics on your work?

LB: As a child, comic books were the only thing I read. What interests me about them is their power to make you imagine. It's enormous. It seems to me that, strangely, a novel can trigger the imagination much less than one frame of comics, because when you read it you're under the spell of the writer's imagination. Words actually inhibit imagination, because they describe too much. In comics, an image starts you up and you can imagine an entire adventure.

NM: Is that why *Le Dernier Combat* has no dialogue?

LB: Partly. Actually, in the beginning I didn't think about it at all. But since the principal character is alone most of the time, he really has nothing to say. When he sees somebody, his words are likely to be "How are you?" or, "What's your name?" Not too interesting. It was exciting to eliminate words so that a *real* need to communicate something—even a word as simple as "hello"—would be very moving.

NM: Your film, with its bleak post-nuclear landscape, seems to have a terribly pessimistic view of the world.

LB: I don't think so. I made a film that takes place after a catastrophe—nobody ever specifies what kind of disaster—and one has to survive in the debris. It's not pessimistic: I simply put an ordinary character in an extraordinary situation. It's the same principle as in *Hell in the Pacific* or *Robinson Crusoe*. It's a situation that enables you to unveil the true feelings of people, to strip them to their essential core, which is immediately visible. Here the good are good and the bad bad, and they disclose their nature. By contrast, in our society everybody puts on appearances and smiles at you, and then goes on to talk behind your back.

NM: But you show mostly slavery, hatred, oppression, even murder . . . .

LB: Yes, but what's the difference between that and what goes on in our society?

NM: Your film, then, is a metaphor for our current situation?

LB: You could say that. The people in the film continue behaving the way they must have before the catastrophe. The brute who beats up people and keeps a chained slave, must have been a vicious boss. He simply expresses himself in a more extreme way now.

I try to show the merit of reducing the relationships between people to their most simple and straightforward values. I think there's been an escalation of values in our society and hence their erosion. I try to bring back more primitive ones, where friendship can involve simply sharing your meal with someone, and love can be born out of the mere glimpse of a woman's hand.

NM: In many American sf films, the adventure tends to be purely physical, while yours is largely an interior journey.

LB: *Le Dernier Combat* is a false sf film, because what happens between its characters is totally real. The feelings are so simple they're almost childish. I believe that when a film touches people, it's their childish side that it touches. But I don't agree with you about American films. The best—and I like *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, which I consider sf, *Star Wars*, *2001*, *Close Encounters*, but not *Star Trek*—have that inner layer. *Raiders* takes place in the Nazi period, which adds a significance to the film which the sequel, *Indiana Jones*, doesn't have. *Close Encounters* is also a profound issue: the arrival of other forms of life to Earth.

NM: Is there something you dislike about the way Americans deal with the genre?

LB: I think they explain too much: they give dates, reasons for what will happen, where and how . . . . Why speak about it when you can show it? It's useless. This is why I don't explain anything. The worst in this respect is *The Dark Crystal*, which, without its prologue would be a nice film: they tell the whole story in the opening sequence, and then the rest of the film becomes simply a retelling of the story with images.

NM: How do your projects begin? With an image, an idea, a theory?

LB: It's different each time. *Le Dernier Combat* started with the decor. My partner Pierre Jolivet and I saw these exquisite ruins in the middle of Paris and decided immediately to

Vonda N. McIntyre ruins her dignified reputation.
Photo by Jeff Levin

shoot a film there. What we needed was a story to go with it. So we decided to write one that took place after a catastrophe. Then we thought of people who would live there. So we had to imagine what they would do. And so on.

Subway—which I actually wrote before *Combat*—started with the same principle but then changed completely. I found the metro extraordinary and wanted to shoot there, but couldn't come up with the right story. So I let it go and wrote a story about a crazy guy, a character who's always a bit ahead of the others who follow him. Whenever he tells the truth, nobody believes him. Whenever he lies, they do. Which insures that the audience never knows what's happening. Then there's a beautiful, normal woman who falls in love with him because he's too much. It's a love story, which has nothing to do with the decor. But then I added the metro so that it would clash with this tale and ultimately devour it.

NM: Once again, a metaphor?

LB: Yes, insofar as the character is a real character who's totally outside of society. But he's right, while the fifty million around him are wrong. It doesn't make for an easy situation to live in....

NM: Is that also a filmmaker's reality? An artist often lives on the margin.

LB: Yes, but it's not as extreme. I know people who can't adapt socially. People who get devastated if a friend neglects to say "hi" sometime. People who have no skin at all.

NM: Is this a self-portrait?

LB: I was like that in my adolescence and it was very painful. My wife is like that.

NM: How was it painful?

LB: Because school doesn't prepare you at all for life. It's a perpetual lie that prepares us for a false reality, which has nothing to do with life. They never explain to you why two million people take the metro every morning. And when you find out, it's a real shock. You can end up shooting yourself.

NM: When did you realize that you wanted to make films?

LB: At seventeen. I left school in my last year, ignoring my parents' wish that I graduate. So I had to leave them as well. I left everybody and looked for work in films. The world of the cinema wasn't as bad as I expected. I was more surprised by life in general. By its cruelty—the cruelty of the street, of the apartments facing each other, of the neighbors, of the grocer and the butcher....

NM: And filmmaking was your way of reacting against this reality?

LB: No, I never really analyzed why I wanted to make films. It was the sum total of everything else. I wrote a lot of stories, already as a kid. And I took thousands of photographs, of everything that moved, and even things that didn't. And I went to a lot of movies and plays. I saw 350 films a year. I'd enter a six-screen theater and go from one movie to the other. But it wasn't an escape, I always felt a need to tell stories and now I'm telling them to the audience instead of school friends. Now I'm doing the same thing a bit more seriously, while making a living....

NM: But where does the need for an imaginary life come from?

LB: Imagination is a means to fend off solitude. I was very much alone at certain periods in my life. I was an only son and my parents were divorced. And I never was an integral part of any group. I posed too many questions about things to be too popular with other kids.

NM: Do you seek to reveal yourself through your work?

LB: It's true that filmmaking is a means toward self-expression, but I find great security in hiding behind the screen. Whatever you reveal of yourself is indirect because there's this barrier to protect you. It's nothing compared to what an actor has to expose. I acted once in a short that my wife directed, and I had a really difficult time doing it. I had the impression I was undressed. Good actors are completely torn inside, or they wouldn't be able to do what they do. People who are too comfortable in their own skin or who have an easy life can't wrench such things out of themselves.

NM: What is it that you wrench out of yourself?

LB: The most important element in filmmaking is telling a story. There are no two ways about it, but, unfortunately, too many French directors forget that. If there's no story, there's nothing. *Raiders* without a story would be little more than *High Road to China*—which is nil.

NM: What impact do you seek to have on the audience?

LB: I want to move them, to make them cry, laugh, and fear. I want to open them up and make them believe in something else. That's what I look for when I enter a dark theater.

DIGESTED FUTURES

Freud said of artists that they give up money, celebrity, and the society of beautiful women for their art. Experience seems to show that Freud was right on the mark, but the Viennese Oracle had more to say: through their sacrifice artists hope, he claimed, to achieve wealth, celebrity, and the society of beautiful women. A big gamble to take and most artists play their chips cautiously, doling out the art in nickels and dimes. One unexpected and generous exception to the rule is **Tim Powers' *The Anubis Gates*** (Ace), a rousing, rollicking, meaty amalgam of time travel, English Literature (Romantic Period 211, 6 credits), and Egyptian divinity that simply has no worthy parallel in 100 years of sf. That's not to say that this is the very best spec-fic ever written, just that nobody's ever before turned out quite this brand of crazy, high-spirited, literary fun and been able to pin an sf label on the result. What that says about our favorite genre is a little shocking to think, but one thanks the powers from Ra to Isis that Tim Powers has so far chosen to make his career in this particular literary backwater. At the very least he's owed two-thirds of an sf crown; Freud's lovely women may have to wait on the sequel however.

Dramocles, ruler of Glarm, has had to wait thirty years, not for his crown—which rests uneasy on his muddled head—but to learn that he has a destiny to fulfill in the wide uncaring universe. **Robert Sheckley** is a man who cares deeply about a great many things but he doesn't let anything get in the way of a good time for all. ***Dramocles: An Intergalactic Soap Opera*** (Holt, Rinehart, & Winston) is a wild sendup of every cliché in the book, and just about every book at that. Shakespeare takes a drubbing that Kit Marlowe couldn't deliver, and Fred Silverman takes some licks the networks haven't thought of. If you like your sf as broad as Lady MacBeth's tush (and who doesn't) then Sheckley's latest will fulfill your every fantasy.

The streets of New York are piled high with shit in **Trevor Hoyle**'s ecological disaster novel, ***The Last Gasp*** (Crown), and if you're guessing that a steaming load of the brown bomber is deposited between this disaster's two covers you're more farsighted than Hoyle ever is, and $14.95 the richer for it. Not since Hubbard's Horror, *Battlefield Earth*, have so many words stunk so much. It's a damn shame, because no sf slated for big publishing bucks since Gregory Benford's *Timescape* (1980) has treated the problem of the 21st century (short of nuclear war) as anything other than a bust-yer-guts horror flick. Facile feebish writing, God alone knows, has its place in the scheme of things, but *The Last Gasp* reads like an Arthur Hailey redo of *The Silent Spring*, and the subject's just too crucial to bear that kind of abuse. Ecology seems to be a word that's gone out of fashion with sf types, and so maybe Hoyle should be given his due for not kneejerking with the James Watt crowd—but in the long run Hoyle's novel will leave readers gasping for all the wrong reasons. Wholesale planetary pollution shouldn't be a laughing matter.

The Walter Cronkite of Science Fiction, **Gregory Benford**, has been in more living rooms than most, and why not? His fiction is filled with a homely, pithy intelligence that rings as truth, and a sad-wise voice that

resonates with human concern. Benford is one of our very best, and is at his very best when he brushes right up against his readers, sharing their thoughts, and troubles, and daily concerns. That's tough to do in a sci-fi novel, from seven parsecs left of Cassiopeia. Too many writers seem to feel it can't be done at all, but Benford keeps his finger on the human pulse, and his books are bigger and richer for it. ***Across the Sea of Suns*** (Timescape/Simon and Schuster) contains as far-flung an adventure as any space opera; aliens, mayhem, and machines gone mad, but no traditional space opera has ever explored so deeply and convincingly what Man may feel confronted by the Space beyond our doors. Benford is a scientist, and science is the business of confronting mysteries. *Across the Sea of Suns* may be as good an introduction to the life of the mind as any other.

David Brin is a writer young in books, but already he's attracting the kind of attention Benford did in his pre-*Timescape* days. In the process, Brin's earned a reputation as a smart, ambitious, and vigorous writer. His two most recent novels, ***Startide Rising*** and ***The Practice Effect*** (Bantam) carve out a wide niche. Maybe too wide.

Epic in scale, full of sweeping philosophies, *Startide Rising* attempts *tour de force* status—and misses. This story of shipwrecked space-mariners desperately struggling against all and every kind of odd-kink alien is so ambitious, that only a Tolstoi could have pulled it off—and even Tolstoi never looked so far afield. Still the book achieves much, and Brin's powerful evocation of otherworldliness is memorable, if a little on the cold side.

For all his talent, on the basis of *Startide Rising* one wouldn't credit Brin with a sense of humor. One would be wrong. Brin followed up his star turn with the kind of buffoonery Benny Hill would enjoy. The *Practice Effect* is to the grand symphony of *Startide Rising* what the "Pagan Love Song" is to Ludwig's Ninth, but it does demonstrate a certain very low and very human capacity for snickering in and out of season. In Brin's career it would be fair to label *The Practice Effect* as the pause that refreshes. After all, even old Tolstoi stopped to suck down a cold one every so often...

Vonda McIntyre practices another kind of literary schizophrenia. Last year her *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan* (complete with lm) climbed bestseller lists. This year ***Superluminal*** (Houghton Mifflin) is finding a more sedate, dignified pace as befits a lady of quality. Those millions who quick-read McIntyre's trendy tie-in are in for a special kind of treat if they mistake *Superluminal* as more of the same. McIntyre has a sure, uncompromising hand with austere, moody, deeply atmospheric fiction. *Superluminal* is the kind of love story unknown to the pompous Captain Kirk, and there's something satisfying about the thought that it will catch readers unaware, catch them up for a long slow read, and maybe, just might, turn them into different kinds of readers. The quality kind.

—John Silbersack

READER'S CRAMP

I've been indulging my unhealthy interest in writers this month. I've talked to them on the phone, eaten with them, related publishing business horror stories, libeled our mutual acquaintances, expressed an interest in their financial matters, sex lives, bowel movements, and the like . . . ugly, ugly behavior. But let's lay the blame for this where it squarely belongs, on five new non-fiction titles:

John C. Carr's The Craft of Crime: Conversations with Crime Writers (Houghton Mifflin) provides a rare single-volume overview of modern mystery writing by introducing such genre luminaries as Ed McBain, Robert B. Parker, Ruth Rendell, Dick Francis, Gregory McDonald, and Janwillem van de Wetering in remarkably lucid discussions of their work and their contemporaries. What surfaces from most of Carr's interviews is the challenge these people face in dealing with what is primarily a conservative readership—having to ring changes on a form invisibly, with all the integral trappings convention demands. And for those writers with serial characters there is the daring burden of being creative within their own subgenre while making each work complete and innovative in itself.

This sort of book is addictive, so I immediately went on to ***Dashiell Hammett, A Life***, by **Diane Johnson** (Random House)—the third such biography to appear in as many years, and the only one with the cooperation of Hammett's lovechum and executrix, playwright Lillian Hellman. I also found myself compelled to read ***Dark Valley Destiny: The Life of Robert E. Howard*** by **L. Sprague de Camp, Catherine Crook de Camp** and the late **Jane Whittington Griffin** (Bluejay Books). Speaking of subgenres, both Hammett and Howard invented schools of popular fiction at roughly the same period in history (early twenties to mid-thirties): Hammett gave us the Continental Op, Sam Spade, and the hard-boiled private eye novel; and Howard, Conan the Cimmerian and the field of heroic fantasy. Both men have their attractions as well as enigmas—which is the why of their biographies. Johnson's *Hammett* keenly appraises his work in counterpoint to a detailed but somehow soulless schematic of his life. Hellman's well-known (and well-exercised) veto power over the making of this book casts a shadow on Johnson's accuracy in depicting L.H.'s very significant role, as it has with past Hammett biographers by incurring their wrath. The de Camps and Griffin, on the other hand, provide a revelatory account of Howard's rural Texas upbringing and haunts—which he never lived to stray from—while failing in the last half of *Dark Valley Destiny* with a rather inflated, pedestrian assessment of his fiction. That it isn't as critically incisive as Sprague de Camp's Lovecraft biography of a decade ago, makes me think darkly of his co-ownership of the Howard franchise.

From there, then, I flitted to autobiographical criticism—to **Joanna Russ** and **Samuel R. Delany**, of sf fame, who wear their biases on their literary lapels, like insignia and charms. Early in her career, Russ wrote sword and sorcery stories, paying her debt to Howard by showing up the work of his imitators as the shallow, silly pap it was—matching the conviction that runs through his work with a strong female lead that reflected her budding feminist consciousness. Long since come to fruition, in her rhetorical 1975 novel *The Female Man*, the most recent expression of Russ's concerns is ***How to Suppress Women's Writing*** (University of Texas Press). This wince-provoking thesis provides a systematic breakdown of the sometimes blunt, but more often insidious, methods used during the past century by the academic and editorial establishments to invalidate, spindle, and/or deep-six the artistic and critical works of women who've managed not to follow the party line. Far from being a cranky apologist for feminist writing—which itself would be a manner of self-nullification—Russ shows how these methods are also used to devalue accomplishments in genres, like mystery and sf, and pigeonhole (for example) black writers as merely issue-oriented. Delany neatly picks up on these thoughts in ***Starboard Wine: More Notes on the Language of Science Fiction*** (Dragon Press). Easily his most accessible book of criticism, among 1978's *The Jewel-Hinged Jaw* and *The American Shore*, *Starboard Wine* examines sf's development and potential in a context of cross-pollination with general literature. One of the field's more adventurous practitioners, Delany expertly grounds his theoretical proposals with his unique viewpoint as a successful black author whose passion for sf began while growing up in 1950s' Harlem.

No one works in a vacuum, writers least of all. Many of the writers discussed above place their fiction against a social landscape, trying to bounce off it the best they know how. I'm impressed—but then I *am* impressionable.

—Robert Morales

Samuel R. Delany: "Do you really think I look like Coppola?"
Photo by Jeff Schalles

BROWN-NOSING

The ***James Brown*** revival started a few years back, when some good ears realized that most of the moves being exploited by new wave—extended dance mixes, unreleased B-sides, screaming vocals, meaningless lyrics, and polyrhythmic assault—had begun with JB in the sixties. There have been several "greatest hits" issues since then, repackaging the same twelve songs over and over, but now Polydor is sponsoring a long-overdue, specialized look at "the hardest working man in show business." Just reissued are eight of Brown's original King LPs, covering 1962-67. These French import pressings of the original mono mixes (domestically distributed at low cost), sound great, and are packaged in reproductions of their original tacky covers, which must be seen to be disbelieved.

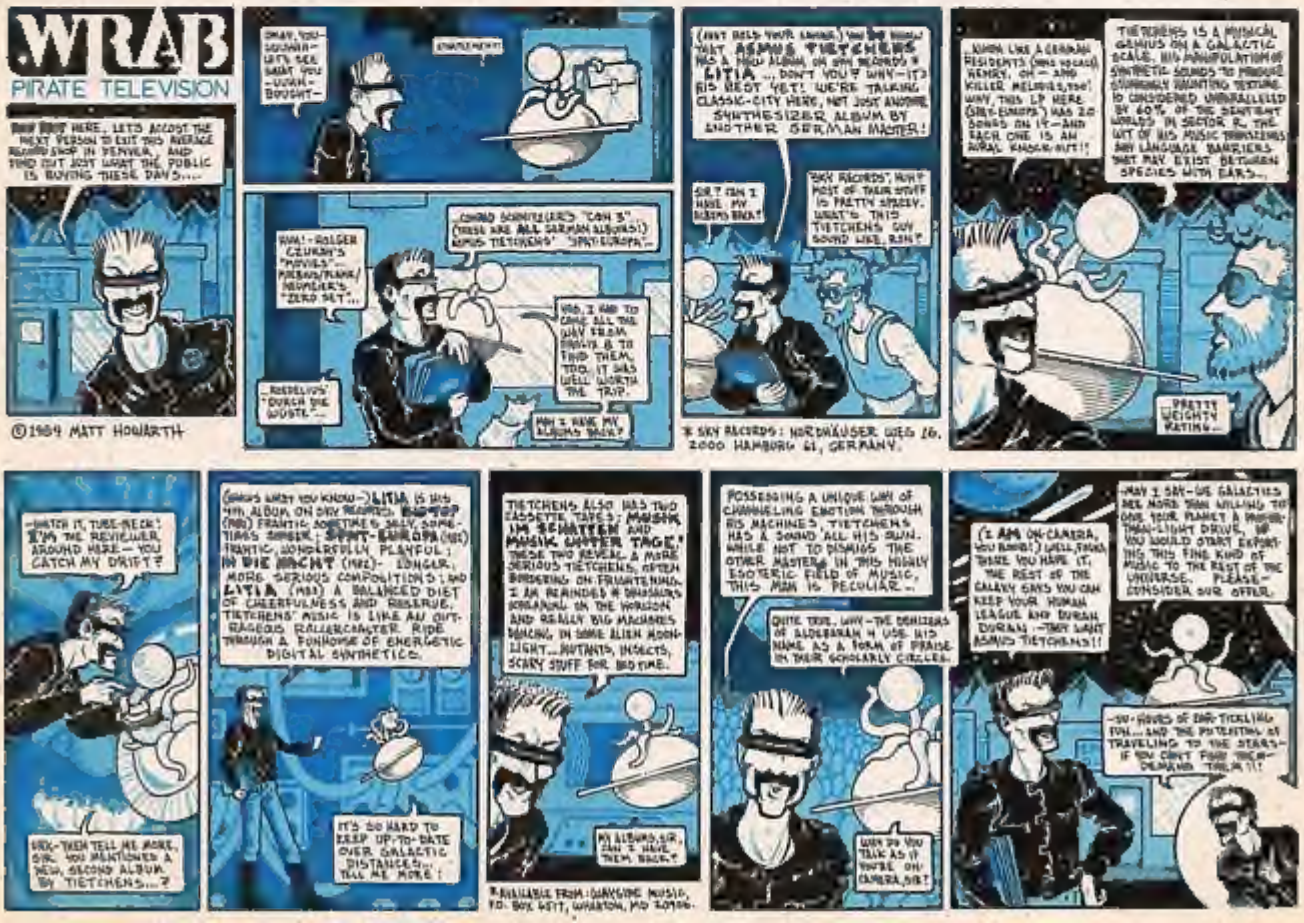
The Hardest Working Man in Show Business takes a break.

Please, Please, Please, JB's first LP (1956; not 1964 as labelled) is a tidy bundle of his earliest singles; a valuable document of smalltown, Fifties R & B, but not what most of us come to Brown to hear. ***Cold Sweat***, apart from its extended, classic title track, is a dull compendium of JB's grunt 'n' screech interpretations of others' material. ***I Got You (I Feel Good)*** (from his movie *Ski Party!*) contains too many songs also found on its fellow reissues and never gels on its own, a fault shared by ***Papa's Got a Brand New Bag***, but to a lesser extent. (Repetition's a bitch on these records: six songs appear on *two* albums each, *three* others show up on *three* each!) Legend has it that JB and the Famous Flames were too busy touring to plenish their early albums thoroughly with new material, and their Cincinnati label thought the fans would want their old faves instead of new filler. Anyone for arguing with history?

Now for the Killers. ***Excitement—Mr. Dynamite*** and ***It's a Man's Man's Man's Man's World*** are nonstop demonstrations of JB at his dawning best: the rhythm & blues not yet funk, the influences still thoughtfully acknowledged, the ballads all heart-stoppingly sincere. ***The Unbeatable 16 Hits*** is a generous, if inaccurately titled, collection of very early, mostly bluesy tunes (it also contains the rarest, and least duplicated material). My own favorite, ***Prisoner of Love***, contains only ballads; it is so piercingly unrequited in lyric, and so narcotically hazy (thanks to the sweeping strings), that it's the *last* thing anyone would want to hear after a breakup—in other words, the *only* thing. This record prolonged my cat's heat!

Polydor has stolen some of the thunder away from this ambitious series by also issuing ***Roots of Revolution*** (British import), a double-LP survey of the best of Brown's *non*-hits, circa 1956-64. This one has all the best tracks from the King reissues (and five of them—including the ultra-rare "Doodle Bug"—are in full stereo), *plus* two previously unreleased alternate takes, and Cliff White's incredible illustrated booklet chronicling the period. Preceded by the 1977 ***Solid Gold*** LP of JB's greatest hits, *Roots of Revolution* is the second album of a proposed series (selected and annotated by White) that will, at long last, restore the full breadth of the James Brown legend to available vinyl, and give Soul Brother #1 his historical due.

—Tim Lucas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COSMETIC CHAMELEON

"If I can't be a chameleon, I won't be happy," says **Jamaaladeen Tacuma**, as the lights change from red to green on a Greenwich Village street corner.

Tacuma, the fastest and cleanest bassist in jazz, changes clothes almost as fast as he does musical styles. Bummed out that he lost a pair of black Ray-Bans on a recent trip to Germany, he flips through a street vendor's tray of sunglasses in search of the perfect replacement. He tries on lots of new aviator and racing car models, settling on a fresh pair of light blue wraparounds. "These'll go great with that blue leather jacket I got in Europe," he says. "Besides, everyone's wearing those Ray-Bans now, so I don't want to do it anymore."

While he scans some leather ties, looking for a peach one, I'm hooked into the walkman, checking out his new record with Cosmetic, a hardfunk dance number called "So Tranquilizin'"—and Jamaaladeen's singing is anything but.

Tacuma, best-known for his playing with Ornette Coleman (*Body Meta, Of Human Feelings*, and *Dancing in Your Head*), is busting out in all directions. He's currently doing some more playing with Ornette, recording with his one-man funk band **Cosmetic**, and working on new stuff with his improvisational—he doesn't want to call it "jazz"—ensemble **Jamaal**.

Tacuma is a new breed jazzman who's redefining the parameters of the music. "Jazz is just a label people need to put on something. There's always been improvisational music—bebop, cool jazz, the stuff Miles does, music from the 1990s. If people want to call it jazz, they can call it jazz. To me, it's just . . . music and it's always gonna change."

In other words, don't expect him to sound like Stanley Clarke, or Mingus, or Motown session man James Jamerson. He's capable of sounding like any of them, and yet he still sounds only like Tacuma. Whether he plays harmolodic or disco or classical, the Tacuma stamp remains. A hard but lyrical sound, melodic and muscular like a sprinter. Tacuma's lacing lines dominate whatever session he's on—just like his long face, easy good nature, and amazing clothes (from antique to well past post-modern) dominate whatever street he happens to be walking down.

His mania for variety and ease with change comes from three places. Tacuma grew up in Philadelphia, where he soaked up lots of James Brown, Motown, and Philly soul. He had his own vocal group when he was thirteen, took up the bass around the same time and began listening to avant-garde jazz a little later. He even took classical bass lessons for awhile.

Ready for just about anything, he got a call from Ornette Coleman and joined his trailblazing electric band Prime Time when he was just nineteen. In France on his first European tour with Prime Time, Tacuma converted to Islam, adopting a new name (which means "beauty of the faith"), changing it from Rudy McDaniel. "It helped me see the world as a bigger thing, with different people who all have different ideas and concepts."

As for Coleman, Tacuma says, "Playing with Ornette has made me understand that I should not be connected to a particular style. I should just play music."

His own music embodies the soul of Philadelphia, the focus and faith of Islam, and Coleman's free-blowing approach. ***Show Stopper*** (Gramavision), his first album under his own name, has one side of Coleman-like jazz-funk backed with a freewheeling mixed bag of sounds: a classical piece with bowed bass and wordless singing from *Diva*'s Wilhelmina Fernandez, a bass solo of uncommon beauty, an African-style number with four drummers, and some spacey sounds guest-starring guitarist—and fellow Coleman alumnus—James Blood Ulmer.

The tunes flow like a five-part suite, and this unity of diverse elements is what Tacuma is really aiming at with his music. His next album's gonna be called ***Renaissance Man*** and dedicated to black baritone and political activist Paul Robeson—it'll have everyone on it from King Crimson drummer Bill Bruford to poet Jayne Cortez. It'll be another attempt at breaking down barriers, categories, and definitions which imprison people. "The collaboration of funk and jazz and soul and rock is really very good! It breaks down the idea of this and this and that. To me it just means that people involved in what they're doing should just try to do the best they can at it."

—Stuart Cohn

Jamaaladeen Tacuma models a new tie.

Photo by Jonathan Postal

NAHALLYWOOD

Director **Joe Dante** doesn't look weird. He's compact and wiry, wears glasses, and speaks like a submachine gun manufactured in New Jersey. Average kinda guy. Someone who buys pizza by the slice.

Put him behind a camera, however, and reality as we know it gets bent totally out of shape. Dante has an uncanny ability to take conventional ideas and make them unconventional. Real life becomes a cartoon. Terror spawns comedy which, in turn, leads you back to sheer fright.

A graduate of the Roger Corman school of "give me a picture in three weeks" filmmaking, Dante, in his eight years at the helm, has delivered three bona fide cult items (***The Howling***, ***Piranha***, and, with Allan Arkush, ***Hollywood Boulevard***) and a memorable vignette in the ill-fated ***Twilight Zone*** movie (which resembled a Saturday morning animation fest viewed during a mescaline trip).

It wasn't until this year, however, that the full extent of Dante's aberrated vision was felt via the release of the thirteen-million-dollar ***Gremlins***.

Executive produced by Steven Spielberg, *Gremlins* has been described as "*E.T.* with teeth." It is that and more. *Gremlins* is the quintessential monster movie of the 1980s, a mad mixture of mirth and mayhem wherein a cuddly little pet gremlin, through various strange circumstances, multiplies into an army of bloodthirsty critters—the fur-laden equivalent of punk delinquents. The creatures—cable operated contraptions designed by Chris Walas—are Looney Tunes Tasmanian Devils come to life. The havoc they wreak on a small town is classic.

For Dante, however, it was all in a day's work.

"I never expected to get the strong reactions I got from the film," Dante shrugs. "I always thought of it as, well, a slight, amusing movie. But people either hate this movie—*really loathe* it—or they're saying things to me like, 'It was the best movie I've ever seen!' I'm flabbergasted."

Dante's modesty is tempered by the fact that he knows his cinematic vision is distorted. "I look for familiar topics that can be filmed in ways that haven't really been done before. Yet, I try to preserve all the stuff that's made the subject popular all these years. I like to play with things.

"Hey Billy, what's that smell?"

Joe Dante looking for gremlins

Dante: *"Spielberg told me that he thought Piranha was the best Jaws rip-off ever made."*

When I first got hold of *Gremlins*, it was at a point where my career was at a low ebb. I hadn't worked since *The Howling*. I hadn't found anything I wanted to do and it was beginning to look like I was going to have to film something I wasn't crazy about. This script arrived from Spielberg. My first thought was, 'Obviously this was sent to the wrong office.'

I read it and thought it was a really neat idea, but it was clearly going to cost a lot of money. There were a lot of creatures and because of all the stuff they had to do, they had to be done stop motion. That's expensive.

I met with Steven. He told me that he thought *Piranha* was the best *Jaws* rip-off made, and that's why he'd called me. He wanted the movie made but he didn't want to spend a lot of money. I figured it could be fun, so said yes.

"Back then the script was pretty gruesome. The creatures didn't do anything funny. They just killed people. Yet there was this ingenious quality to the material that was almost sweet. As we developed it, it got further and further away from being a horror movie. I don't know what it is now but it ain't horror.

"We changed the script as we went along, and it just got wilder and wilder. I've always found that horror and humor mesh. Horror movies and fantasy films are basically absurd, in that they're based on illogical premises. To me, the absurdity the disorder is a major part of why they're scary. Yet, there's a funny side to disorder to insanity. I mean, they didn't make *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* for nothing. Horror has to have humor breaks. Look at *The Exorcist*. It's a great movie but it's relentlessly grim. If Lee J. Cobb wasn't in it, who could sit through it?"

Dante and his creative team re-worked *Gremlins* into a neat three act fantasy. In the first, idyllic, section, a cuddly gremlin named Gizmo is introduced. In the second, pivotal act, the mood turns ominous. Gizmo goes gonzo and spawns a savage horde of mean first cousins. A teacher is killed by an evil gremlin and our hero's mother is confronted by the nasty creatures. Surprisingly and importantly, she fights back, letting the audience know that this isn't going to be another slob and slash horror hack-job. The third act, when the gremlins take over the town, is a sinister slapstick *tour de force*, with gremlins break dancing, getting drunk, and singing along to the soundtrack of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*.

It was a hard movie to balance," says Dante. "There's a point in the movie where I was in danger of losing the audience, and I knew it. I knew I ran the risk of making them think I was betraying them. I figured by the scene where the science teacher is attacked by the gremlin, I had already offended the people who had come to see another *E.T.* But even for the people who were with me, that scene was tricky. We re-edited that one a number of times to make sure audiences would know right then that the movie was going to be fun-scary and not revolting scary. But it's still a more tense scene than I ever imagined it to be. There's a tension from the story, but there's also a tension in the audience about what kind of movie they're going to see."

It's funny how frightening that scene is—yet there's no blood-letting. If you do things right you don't have to show gore. The Val Lewton approach continues to be vindicated. The more people are left to imagine, the more horrible are the things they do imagine.

Once imagination becomes reality in the storyline, however, and the ghoulish gremmies are shown on the screen, Dante found himself surrounded by cable operated bad dreams personified; visitations that proved as nightmarish off camera as on. "It was almost impossible to deal with the gremlins," Dante moans.

"It's enervating and frustrating and unrewarding to work under those circumstances. The only thing that keeps you going is the thought that if you make it work, it's going to look neat. The actual mechanics of trying to make this stuff look real is so unpleasant and time consuming that it's like working in slow motion.

It takes forever to set up and forever to shoot. You usually do twenty-five or thirty takes per shot at different speeds, and then you have to watch all of them to see how the creatures are working. After you've seen five or six takes, your mind goes numb. You can't tell what's good or bad. That's why Steven was smart about this. He liked the concept. He wanted to see it on the screen. But he was damned sure that he wasn't going to get stuck doing this sort of thing. I can certainly understand that now. This was the most difficult experience of my life.

Each gremlin was electronically controlled by eight operators. Each one of those operators had a video monitor in front of them and their cable control to see what they were doing. All of the operators, the cables, and the monitors were spread out over the set. This constricted the movements of the camera. The gremlins couldn't move too far one way or the other either or the camera would catch a glimpse of the mechanics.

"If you have a scene with six gremlins, underneath the frame line you have eight operators times six, plus the monitors and cables. You have to strategically place all that stuff before you can even concentrate on the scene. If one monitor goes out or a cable breaks, everyone has to break for an hour or so while the repairs are made.

At the same time, you have to keep the actors lively with all this going on. You really have to do a song and dance."

In spite of the logistical nightmare Dante found himself growing fond of the little devils. "We kept on cooking up new and more bizarre things for them to do. At one point, they take over a bar and just go crazy. That scene just got more and more added to it as we went on, until it was about ten minutes long and hysterical. Out of context, it had people in stitches. When we cut it into the film, it was still funny, but it stopped the story cold. We had to trim it. The problem was, of course, that everyone had their favorite bits they didn't want cut.

As bizarre as the gremlins antics are, the antics of the people in the movie are just as loopy. Dante has a habit of sticking weird, anecdotal sight gags into the periphery of his pictures and *Gremlins* has more than its share. During the course of the film, Robby the Robot turns up in the background and repeats his dialogue with the drunken cook from *Forbidden Planet*, an

unsuspecting fellow at a science convention sits in The Time Machine and zips off to points unknown, and Steven Spielberg himself takes a joyride on a strange, wheeled vehicle.

Dante acknowledges his comic-book gag style happily. "I was influenced a lot by the stuff that Will Elder used to do in the old *Mad Magazine*. He had stuff crammed into every frame. I used to worry about putting too many things in a movie, but not now. When I started out, I didn't have the discipline to know when to stop. In this picture I probably seem more excessive than usual but, in reality, there's not a single gag in the picture that takes away from the storyline.

"In *The Howling*, for instance, I had a gag with Roger Corman fishing for a dime in a phone booth. Well, that got a big laugh in New York and Los Angeles, but elsewhere people were confused. They were wondering why I was paying attention to this guy who wasn't a character. I suppose I'd do it again, though, just to get Roger to work for free—but it's a dangerous chance to take. You can irritate an audience that way.

"The things in this movie—like The Time Machine disappearing—people will either get or not get. But the important thing is that there are other bits going on at the same time as those jokes. The story is still progressing. I like having jokes in the background as long as they don't detract from what's going on in the foreground.

Despite its obvious and barnyard humor (Dante, a comic book buff, originally wanted to be a cartoonist and states happily that "the first time I saw a gremlin was in a Bugs Bunny cartoon."), *Gremlins* ran into a lot of critical flak when it was released. Some film reviewers, reeling from what they construed as excessive violence in *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, saw the Spielberg name on *Gremlins* and zeroed in on it as another example of hyperviolence geared towards kids.

Dante, characteristically, remains unruffled by the charges. "I think the reaction of those critics had more to do with stories that were in the newspapers at the time than with the movie itself. I don't think *Gremlins* is any more violent than *King Kong*. It's just that, currently, there is a lot of concern about the welfare of children. There are a lot of professional moralists out there who'd like to tell people what to see.

"In making the movie, I made sure it wasn't gruesome. I didn't want to distance the audience. I didn't want people to turn against it because it was too unpleasant. On the other hand, I didn't want the nasty gremlins *not* to do bad things because then I wouldn't have had any conflict.

"Some people say that the movie shouldn't be seen by kids. I disagree. The interesting thing in going to our sneak previews was watching the kids in the audience with their parents. The kids would be totally in the spirit of the movie and the parents just wouldn't get it. The kids would be worried and scared at one point and, then, they'd laugh and relax. Later, they'd be scared again. It was like a roller coaster ride. Their parents, however, would just get scared and *stay* scared. Period. When the gremlins did funny things, the grown-ups didn't get it. They thought the evil things were just too horrible to be funny. The kids saw right through that."

"The kids' responses have been heart-warming. They've liked it because they've found it funny and scary and sad. The kids love the ending where the cute gremlin, Gizmo, is taken back to his original home. That was always problematic to me. I didn't know if it would work. The kids find it heart-rending. I was amazed by that. They're in tears during that scene.

I guess I'm a really bad judge of my own movies. You can't watch your own movies like you can watch someone else's. I mean, you make movies because you like movies and you want to film things that you'd enjoy seeing. The problem is, once you've made the movie, you can't watch it because you know all the surprises. Your movies never seem to be part of the mass of movies out there. They're always yours, not a real director's."

Following the release of *Gremlins* ("I'm proud of myself," George Miller (*Mad Max, Road Warrior*) said it was the weirdest picture he's ever seen!"), Dante wants to take a well-earned rest before beginning his next project.

Does he have any ideas for the future? Remembering his dealings with the cable operated meanies, he laughs and says, "I'd like to do a picture about three people trapped in an elevator. No special effects. They don't do too much talking. There's just one overhead shot. The whole movie would be shot in an hour and a half."

Dante cackles appreciatively. "I can see the reviews now. 'Another inexplicable effusion from Dante!'"

No doubt.

THE METAL PROJECTOR

Mel Gibson eyes out the blacktop.

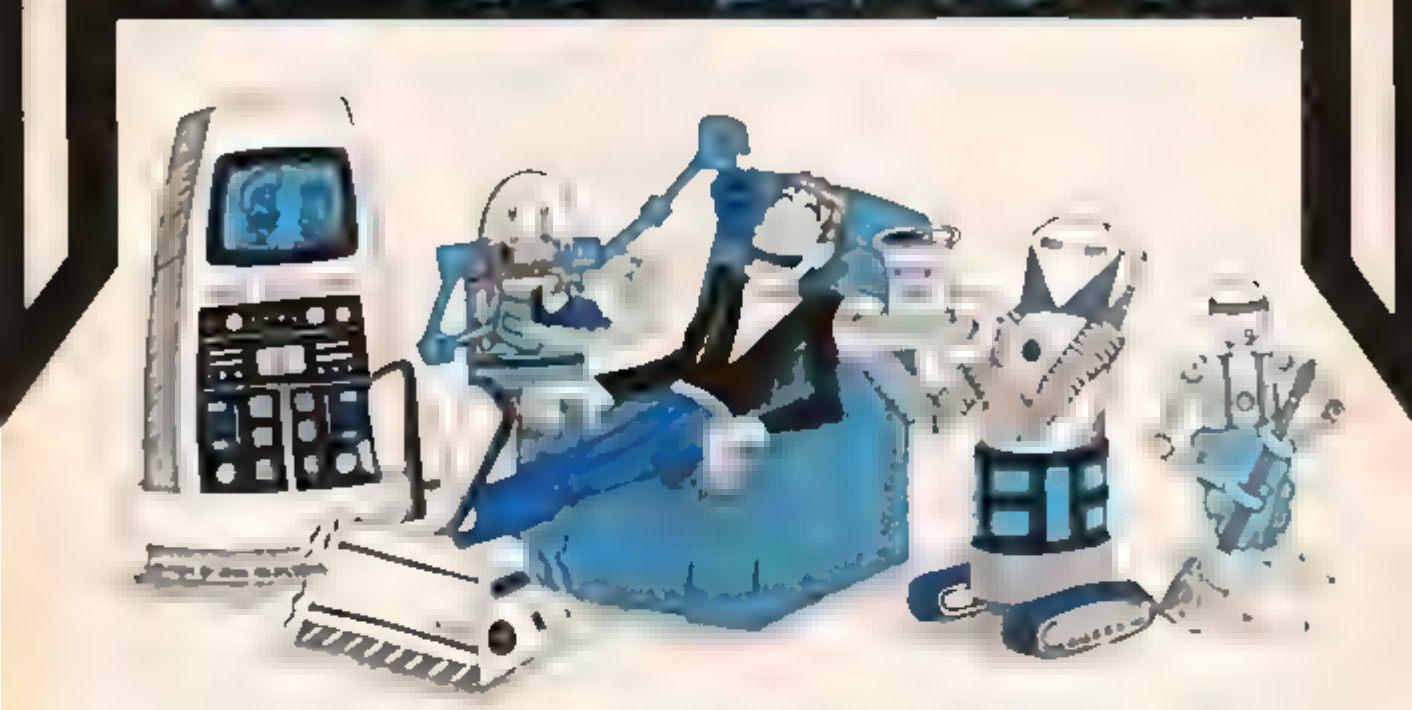
Steven Spielberg [illegible] Lawrence Lasker and Walter F. Parkes to script his pet project ***Peter Pan***, which he hopes will fly early next year. Contrary to earlier reports, Michael Jackson will *not* don green panty hose for the title role, although he would look darling. Spielberg is looking for an unknown. On hold must be *E.T. II*, *Raiders III*, and Spielberg's remake of *A Guy Named Joe* (the 1943 semi-classic with angel Spencer [illegible]

month, **Mel Gibson** begins his third peel-out on the post-apocalyptic blacktop in *Mad Warrior II* or *Road Max III*, whichever you prefer, on location in Australia. Mastermind George Miller will share directing credit with fellow Aussie George Ogilvy—with Miller handling the action and Ogilvy the actors. George Lucas is allegedly dishing out some Mad money to finance the $15 million picture (believe it or not, *forty* times the cost of *Mad Max*). Dino DeLaurentiis plans on resubmerging Jules Verne's **20,000 Leagues Under the Sea** [illegible] Disney version's director Richard Fleischer has been working for DeLaurentiis quite a bit lately, having directed *Conan the Destroyer* and, in Rome, *Red Sonja*, also with Arnold Schwarzenegger. But Fleischer says of the new *20,000 Leagues*, "I haven't been approached to direct it. I don't know what Dino has in mind; maybe he has a new approach. I don't see why a classic should be remade unless you plan to do something new with it." Meanwhile, Dino continues to consort with Stephen King on *Cat's Eye* (featuring *Firestarter*'s Drew Barrymore), and King's werewolf screenplay *Silver Bullet*, targeted for fall '85. Uh-oh. Trouble on the set of the $18 million epic, **Enemy Mine**, has led to the pink slip for director Richard Loncraine after three weeks of chilly shooting in Iceland. Wolfgang Petersen (*Das Boot*) has stepped in to direct the Lou Gossett/Dennis Quaid adventure. Here comes **The Bride**—and now we know who she is, the gauze on the updated Elsa Lanchester character will be lifted on *Flashdance* star **Jennifer Beals**, who, in this version, is a two-timing hell-hag carried over the moat by the creator of her and her man, none other than **Sting**'s libidinous Dr. Frankenstein himself. Paramount thinks that getting **Leonard Nimoy** to write, co-star, and direct ***Star Trek IV*** is the only logical thing to do. The studio hopes to start the picture next January for a Christmas 1985 release. Your man in *Star Trek* special effects, Bob Friedland, has directed the sights for ***I Was a Zombie for the FBI***, a made-for-video movie combining eighties computerized technology with fifties black-and-white esthetics for a super-charged monster-movie look. Aliens spike the world's most popular soft drink, Jni-Cola, while crack FBI agent Rex Armstrong falls in love with TV reporter Penny Carson. Can the world survive such a threat? A talent hunt, to use the term loosely, for three new stooges is currently being conducted by Norman Maurer, Moe's son-in-law and a producer/director involved in such Stooge stand-outs as *The Three Stooges Meet Hercules* and *The Three Stooges in Orbit*, for six new Stooge movies. And you thought there was no creativity left in Hollywood. Jack Clayton, director of spooky films like *The Innocents* and *Something Wicked This Way Comes*, wants to film Shirley Jackson's *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*. Michael Douglas is already working on a sequel to his surprise smash **Romancing the Stone**. May we suggest the title *Getting An Abortion for the Stone*?

—Ed Naha and Steven Maloff

JOHN

HI-TECH LOWDOWN



There's always lots of stuff about robots in this magazine. Sometimes it seems like the only way to get something published here is to write a story starring a robot—especially a homicidal android that loves to screw adolescent girls and stick guys' faces into electric fans. I guess that's why Lou talked me into writing this column about robots. So, here's the latest.

Industrial robots are big. Despite heated union objections, robots are getting a lot of work. They're doing everything from painting garbage trucks to guarding prisons. Even police departments are using them—a bomb squad robot made the front page of the *N.Y. Post* a few months ago when its TV camera found some dead murder suspects.

There's a big hype going on in the home robot industry right now. There are about 45,000 personal robots currently operating around the world, and the robot companies are gearing up for more. They want to convince you that you can't live without one. Their experts believe sales will reach $2 billion by 1990. They're just waiting for the suckers to line up and [illegible].

Like me! A robot would make a great pet—much better than a dog. They can vacuum your rugs, play video games, tell jokes, or get a beer out of the fridge. I never saw any dog do [illegible].

[illegible] odd). The robot explosion will *really* take off once they're equipped for sex.

The home robot scene is still in its infancy—like the computer business was in the early seventies. It's still too early to tell when (and if) it'll take off. If you're in the market for a robot, here's a partial list of what's available now.

Androbot: Got $2,500? Buy a BOB (Brains On Board) robot. He can't do much yet, but Nolan Bushnell (who designed Pong, the first commercially successful video game, and founded Atari when pinball was ruling the arcades) promises it'll be able to do anything you'll want a robot to do: wake you up in the morning, watch the house, take phone messages, and [illegible].

Gemini Inc.: The ComRo 1a1 makes a nice hostess. It can do light housekeeping, serve drinks, tell jokes, and greet house guests. It costs $3,000 ($4,000 with radio control). A deluxe version with TV, tape recorder, and stereo is a whopping $7,500. Tot really looks the part. It's three feet tall and weighs fifty pounds, with a big electronic eye, a rotating head, and two independently controlled arms.

Hubotics: The Hubot robot looks like a walking TV set. Basically, it's a travelling computer (which is a pretty accurate definition of a robot). Hubot's face (seen on the TV screen) moves when he talks, and he's got a big mouth—over 1200 words! He can clean the house, act as a burglar or fire alarm, automatically recharge his batteries, or be operated by remote control.

RB Robot Corp.: The RB5X has gotten a lot of press—probably because it resembles R2D2. That didn't stop the company from going into Chapter 11 though. The RB can sense and put out fires, clean the rug, travel around the home, or sing "Daisy" (remember *2001*?). All for only $1800 (but an arm for it costs an extra $900).

Robot Shop: Wanna robot cheap? Get the K-1. This build-it-yourself robot costs only $400. But to do much beyond lighting up or making noise, you'll need add-ons, like a $40 water gun or a remote radio control (only $700).

Most people will find these robots more trouble than they're worth. It's easier to go to the refrigerator yourself and get a beer. And you have to program a robot's computer to get it to perform a task successfully.

Like computers, though, the prices will continue to drop. Once robots are a bargain and once the robot companies can dream up more things for them to do, a lot of people are going to want one.

Meanwhile, there's lots of news in the computer game biz. I'm sure most of you will want to check out **Spinnaker Software**'s new **Trillium** line of graphic adventure games based on novels by famous science-fiction authors. The first games are: *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury, *Rendevous With Rama* by Arthur C. Clarke, *Starman Jones* by Robert Heinlein, *Dragonworld*, by Byron Preiss and Michael Reaves, and *Amazon* by Michael Crichton. I'll get my hands on them and give you a closer look next time.

Adventure game fanatics will want to get the paws on **Adventure Master**, a two-disk program from **CBS Software** that allows players to design their own adventure games. You can create up to sixty rooms, illustrate the game with a built-in graphics system, and save the game to try it out on your friends (or even submit it to another software company).

Everyone I know is wondering what happened to Alexander Haig. Well, he's joined the Board of Directors of Commodore computers, and will be acting as a consultant.

First Star, who recently licensed their Boulder Dash game to Micro Lab for a whopping $1.3 million, have brought out a **Spy Vs Spy** game based on *Mad* magazine's comic strip.

John Holmstrom

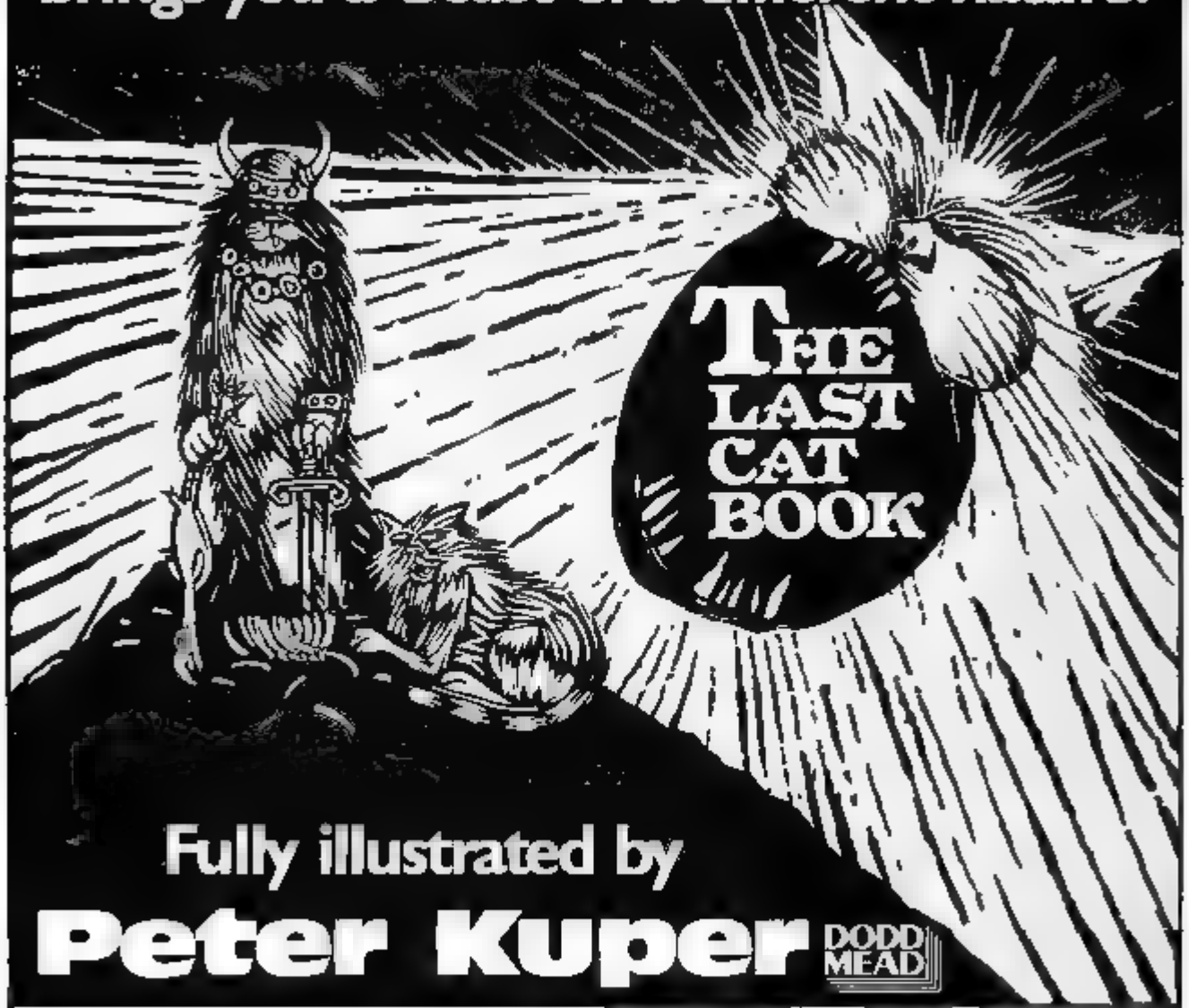
For more information, contact: Androbot (408) 262 8676; ComRo (212) 751 7414; Hubotics (619) 438-9028; RB Robot Corp (303) 279 5525; Robot Shop (714) 768 5798.

Robert E. Howard

creator of

Conan the Barbarian

brings you a beast of a different nature:



Fully illustrated by

Peter Kuper

DODD MEAD

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Please send me _____ copies of **The Last Cat Book** at $5.95 each. I have enclosed a check or money order payable to *Heavy Metal* books. I have included 75¢ for postage and handling of each book.

Total amount enclosed: $_____ number of copies ordered: _____

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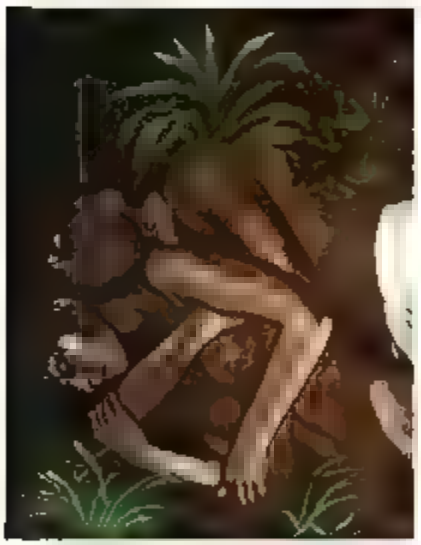
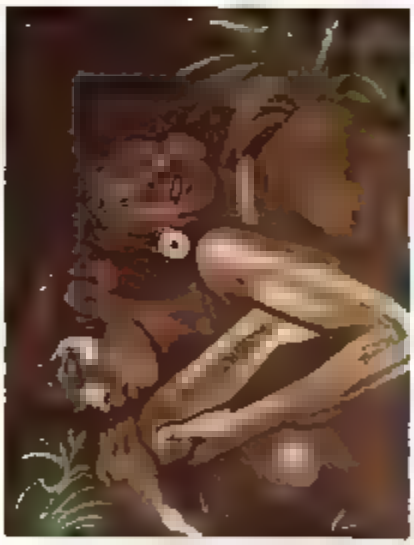
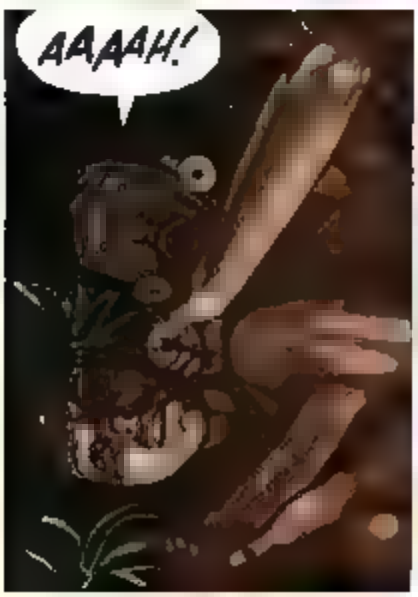
THE GREAT PASSAGE

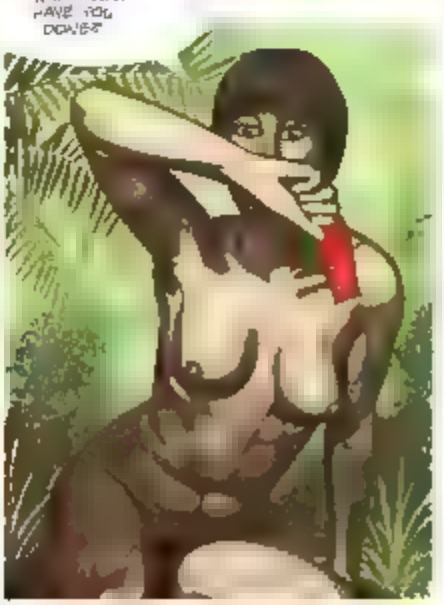
by Jeronaton

OPEANNAH TOOK THE FORM OF AN EAGLE AND FLEW OVER THE LAND OF THE TOLTECS IN SEARCH OF XOTSOTA HER MISSING BROTHER. AFTER BEING MISTAKEN FOR THE GOD QUETZALCOATL. SHE SAVED A YOUNG MAYAN MAN FROM BEING SACRIFICED BY THE TOLTECS. ALONE WITH THE MAYAN SHE REVERTED TO HER TRUE FORM.

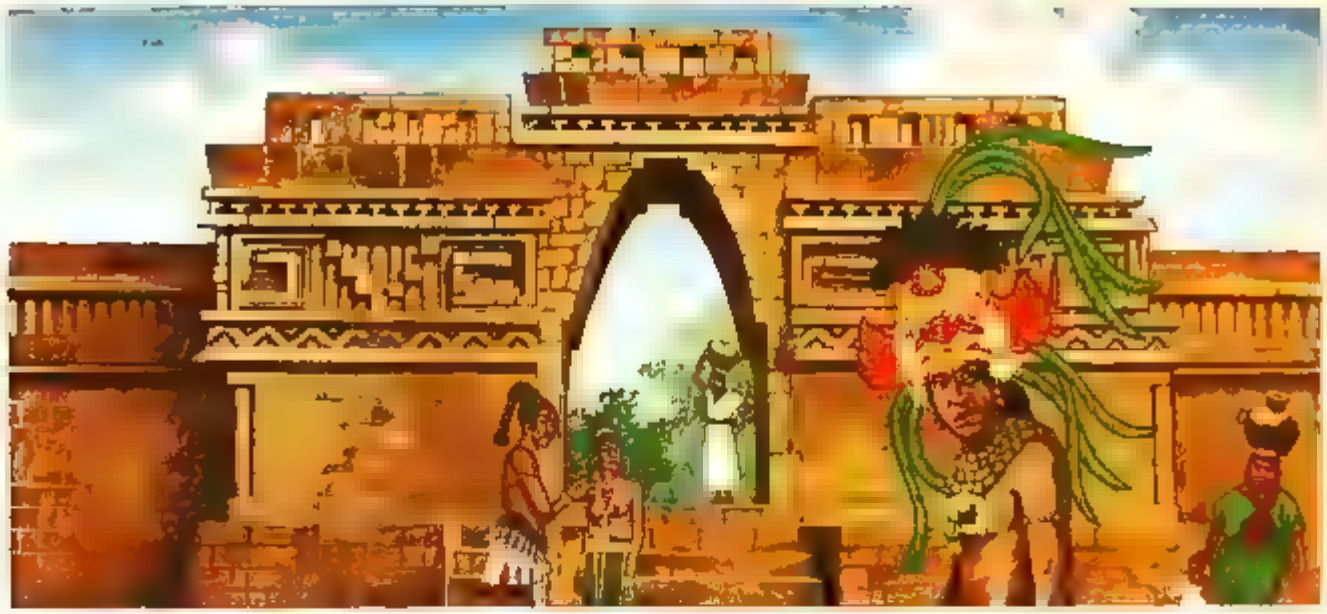


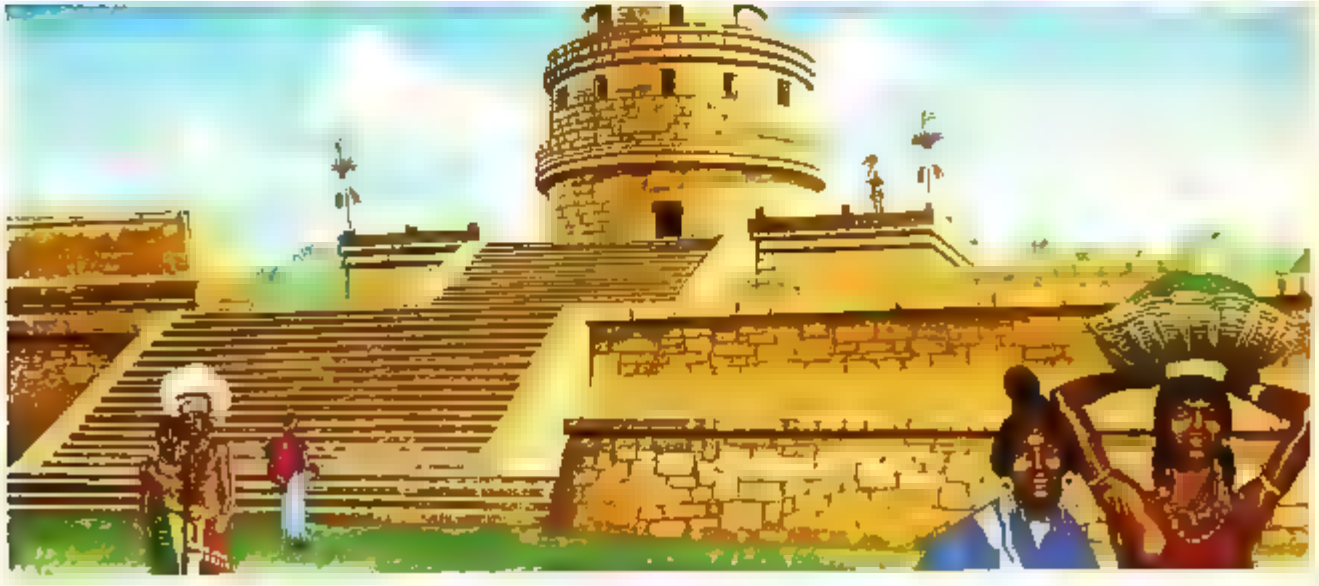






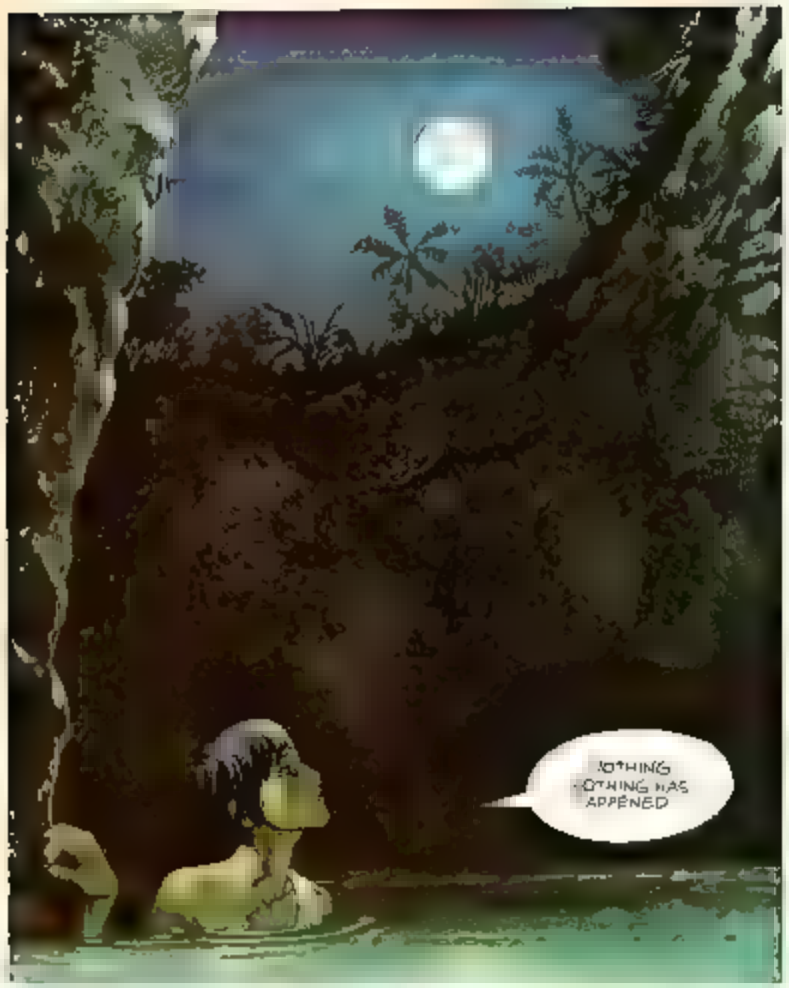
AND WHO ARE YOU?
DON'T BE AFRAID. WE WON'T HURT YOU. BUT THIS MAN MUST DIE AS A SACRIFICE TO THE GOD OF TULA
THE EAGLE'S INTERVENTION SAVED HIS LIFE. BUT IT WAS NOTHING MORE THAN AN EVIL PLOY OF THE GOD NAHUATL, ENEMY OF THE TOLTECS, TO PREVENT THE MAKING OF OFFERINGS TO THE GREAT GOD QUETZALCOATL
WE MUST GO.
MY FRIEND MY FRIEND THOSE ONSTERS HAVE KILLED YOU!
NO, NOT YET. BUT MY DEATH IS NOT TOO LONG OFF. PERHAPS THEY WEREN'T WRONG. AFTER ALL. PERHAPS ONE MUST NOT TRY TO ESCAPE ONE'S DESTINY. I SHALL SPEAK WITH QUETZALCOATL ABOUT DESTINY VERY SOON
NO. I WILL CARE FOR YOU. AND CURE YOU!
THIS USELESS LISTEN. YOU WERE GOOD TO ME. I WANT TO HELP YOU. GO TO CHICHEN ITZA. MENTION MY NAME TO. UH' TO THE OLD PRIEST OF KUKULKAN AT THE OBSERVATORY. HE IS UHH MY FATHER. HE WILL TELL YOU HOW TO GET TO KUKULKAN IN OHH IN THE SACRED CITY OHHH :





A FOREIGN WOMAN WANTS TO SEE ME AND SHE BRINGS NEWS OF MY SON? HAVE HER COME IN
AND AFTER ITZAMNAH HAS SPOKEN
WHAT YOU SAY S TRUE MY SON WAS CAPTURED BY THE TOLTECS, AND THOSE BARBARIANS FROM THE NORTH ALWAYS SACRIFICE THEIR PRISONERS TO THEIR MALEVOLENT GODS OH MY SON MY SON
AND MY SON WANTED TO HELP YOU WELL I WILL NOT DISAPPOINT YOU OR HIM YOU WISH TO CONTACT THE GOD KUKULKAN HERE AT CHICHEN-ITZA A WAY DOES EXIST BUT I MUST WARN YOU THAT IT IS VERY DANGEROUS TO FACE THE GREAT GOD
HERE IS THE SACRED WELL THOSE WHO WANT TO TALK TO GOD DESCEND INTO IT AND STAY THE NIGHT AT THEIR OWN RISK BUT YOU CAN RENOUNCE THIS RECKLESS ENTERPRISE IF YOU'D LIKE
DR. HOLGH HAS NOT CROSSED MY MIND IF WHAT YOU SAY IS REALLY POSSIBLE WOULD I HAVE COME FROM SO FAR AWAY ONLY TO GIVE UP MY GOAL ONCE I GOT HERE?

YOU ARE VERY COURAGEOUS YOUNG WOMAN
I WILL PRAY FOR YOU DURING YOUR VOYAGE LET KUKULKAN BE FAVORABLE TO YOU
TOMORROW MORNING I WILL COME BACK TO LOOK FOR YOU PERHAPS YOU WILL STILL BE LIVING PERHAPS NOT BUT SURELY YOU WILL HAVE MET THE GOD



TO BE CONTINUED.

ARC ANGEL
KRAR
KOOM

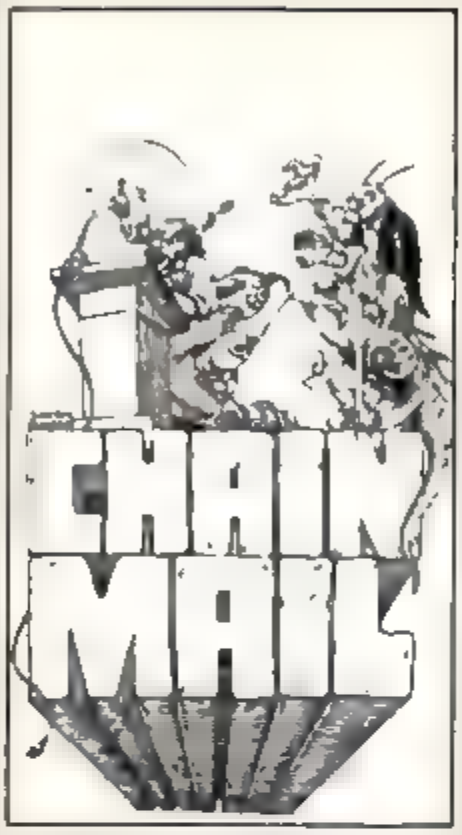
Dear Lou:

Take a bow, sir! Editing Chain Mail must get to be a real pain in the ass. *(You kidding? It's the high point of my month, and I only have to give back half my salary to do it.—ls* I've been reading *HM* for about five years and it seems to me that the majority of the letters you receive are filled with petty little gripes about the magazine's subject matter and opinions. I realize that everyone is entitled to his or her own opinion, no matter how biased it may be, but opinions reach a certain point where they should be kept to oneself.

Violence seems to be the biggest complaint. If certain readers find the material offensive, or if they're having problems separating what they see and read in *HM* from reality, maybe they should have their mommies censor what they read. Artwork is another big gripe. As a commercial artist, I find the art in *HM* refreshing. The self-expressive styles of artists such as Corben, Moebius, Caza, and Liberatore (to name only a few) are an enjoyable change from the categorized, supposedly contemporary art of the commercial field.

One specific letter that sticks in my mind was in the May 1984 issue, complaining that *HM* only critiques the latest music, the "avant-garde and computerized synth-rock." Hey look, if you want to read reviews of bands producing the same old stuff, then go buy a copy of *The Record* or *Billboard* and read about it there. Either stay in a closet and wack-off to your rockabilly or move ahead with open ears and mind. Rock is changing, and there isn't too much you can do about it.

Robert W. Howe III
Big Rapids, MI



Metalites

In stinging response to H. Erik Larsen's shallow and limited view of music (Chain Mail, May 1984), I would like to point out that the music exposed in Dossier is so typical, run-of-the-mill guitar thrash (or trash, if you prefer) what *HM*'s art and stories are to the Sunday Funnies. No comparison. If music didn't progress, we'd all still be grunting and banging on logs (which, come to think of it, might not sound bad!), and we wouldn't have the incredible diversity of music that's available today. It's "avant-garde" artists like Yello, Laurie Anderson, Peter Gabriel, and Wall of Voodoo that are expanding current musical horizons, and we're better off for it. If Mr. Larsen is content with "the roots of his preferred taste—rock 'n' roll," that's fine with me, but let him not forget that if early pioneers like Buddy Holly, Elvis, the Beatles, etc. had had attitudes similar to his, then his so-called Psychobilly movement wouldn't exist.

The principal reason I buy *HM* is to read Lou Stathis's views on music. His "Metal Box" column back in April was practically an inventory of every significant musical landmark of 1983, and I can credit *HM* for my having discovered such noteworthy artists as the Residents and the Urban Verbs. In fact, my only complaint with *HM* is that there's *not enough* musical coverage.

Allen Green
Nashville, TN

Dear Lou:

Concerning the letter written by the Norwegian *(Yep, still whomping on poor Mr. Larsen. Nothing like having a gang of nasty readers do your dirty work for you.—ls)*. I'm afraid he's quite naive of what he speaks. Although the music he assails might be rampant in Norway and most of Europe, exposure here in the U.S. is virtually non-existent, unless you make the effort to search and find it. Even college radio limits this new and daringly creative music to a few hours of airtime, and it's usually very late at night when most people are asleep. I am in awe of *HM*'s music (and film) section, when I read interviews with artists like Ryuichi Sakamoto, or reviews on bands such as Japan, Cabaret Voltaire, SPK, DAF, etc. Lou, you have done an incredible job when you consider that these bands are continually ignored in the major music mags.

G.R. Beuttenmuller
Jericho, NY

Thanks. And you just stated one of the only reasons we bother with music coverage here—because all the best stuff's being ignored. Like, just last week I found myself in a room full of geek rock critics and can you guess what the main topic of conversation was? The new Springsteen album! Sheesh—seconals never put me to sleep quicker. And in answer to some other recent readers' queries: Yeah, I know I haven't been writing much about music of late. I been distracted, and I been lazy, but considering the new petrifying turn the music biz has taken—seizing on one aspect of the old avant-garde, synth-disco, and milking it to death—I think it might be time to whip out the old samurai sword and get back to some serious search-and-destroy operations—ls

Dear Gen. Lou:

Here I am! Another charter member rising to the cause. First of all, I'd like to agree with Daniel Sinclair (Chain Mail, June 1984)—yes, friends, you gotta make money. There is business out there, and as Mrs. Olsen says, "*Heavy Metal* is good cooking!" Next, thank you, Lou. You don't know how many of us waited for some recognition for early seventies monsters such as King Crimson, Gentle Giant, Soft Machine, etc. To actually read these praises came many years too late. To have what I consider a major art mag lay it on the line to a mess of Journey pulp doobies made me flush with lungfuls of fresh oxygen —not to mention brains.

The evolution of a magazine (of any kind, for any reason) is to me a necessity. I have thoroughly enjoyed watching the changes in *HM*. Some were not always readily assimilated, but in retrospect it has created something unique in U.S. ragdom. The addition of interviews delving into real art, (real?) film (*2000 Maniacs* is real), and music comes across very sensibly as a natural evolution in *HM*, and I sincerely appreciate it. You'll be getting my dough willingly for a healthy hunk of time.

Thanks again.

Dan Johnson
Cedar Rapids, IW

Dear *HM*

Heavy Metal is pretty funny to begin with (when you're told "Ranxerox" isn't meant to be taken seriously—you know the whole magazine's a joke), but the Herschell Gordon Lewis interview has to be the most hilarious thing ever to see print. Heaven forbid something that sleazy should really exist. Oh yeah—Lou Stathis gets my vote as the Don Rickles of "funny books."

Kevin Davis
Seattle, WA

Dear Lou:

From the Paprika Plan to the recently declared Marinetti Method, liquid politics, molten Metal, and thought-provoking dialogue with Slava Tsukerman. In his New York "movies are more important than politics" rap, Tsukerman seemed to be suggesting that politics for the public have become movies? He might have said movies are more important than politics in a country where a good agent can get Hollywood a retirement gig in Washington—politics have been reduced to made-for-TV movies. Maybe someday Joan Collins will retire? Until then, I will be "at the club."

Adam Break
Toronto, Canada

clips begin by Robert Palmer

THE Big Biz

HM's 1984 MUSIC VIDEO AWARDS

In one short year, since the introduction of *HM*'s Music Video awards the phenomenon of clips has become big business. Music video graced the cover of *Time* magazine; MTV broke into the black; *Making Michael Jackson's Thriller* sold over 400,000 copies (at $29.95 a pop), signaling music-video's challenge to movies as the leading force in home video; Vestron Music Video and Music Media became the first of a new breed of companies—the music-video label; Sony Beta Hi-Fi brought digital concert quality sound to VCRs; and video artists renamed the music-video creator "optic artist."

In this buzz of big biz activity, what are the trends and bends behind this year's clips?

Video effects are *hot*. Not the electronic nosy effects of yesteryear, but the seamless new world of video opticals. Crisp and alive, video special effects have brought the video "look" into vogue. Despite the popularity of 35mm film, artists are discovering that videotape offers more possibilities for experimentation. Using video *for* video has lead to an expansion of the clip look to include the fantastical quality of tape.

Effects have also been used to create the next generation of beataphors (implied or symbolic images inspired by music). This year, rhythm is being visualized beat for beat. Combining visual music instincts with scratch tracks has yielded hysterical video puns. With practitioners Godley and Creme (*Rockit*) leading the way, the question of cutting *on* or *off* the beat has become obsolete. Now, images *are* the beat.

This new language of video effects has had a larger impact on clips—it's given a very serious medium a sense of humor. Up until now clips had taken themselves a bit too seriously. But effects have resurrected a rock-comedy tradition ignited by the Beatles *Hard Day's Night* and carried forth by the Monkees and Devo.

Another emerging clip trend is the move back to performance and personality. The reverses the mini-movie trend of the last few years which often reduced artists to secondary roles or demanded dramatic acting ability. Now video performers sing to the camera in the role of musical narrator; it's often a cathartic release for both the artist *and* audience. As a result, established performers such as Neil Young and the Cars have been transformed into video personalities, and new artists like Cyndi Lauper have become stars. Of course, the perk here is that the new video stars acquire instant "marquee" value and thus the Big Biz game profits even more.

And though video effects leave everyone laughing, the art of music-video is no joke. While humor has raised the entertainment value of clips, there's been no corresponding rise in consciousness. The commercialization of clips, while securing their financial future, has also taken a spiritual toll.

Most noticeably, budgets are booming. *Thriller* cost more than a million dollars, and the recent Pia Zadora/Jermaine Jackson clip went over the $350,000 mark. With video producers claiming that the average budget is (or should be) $50-100,000, clip budgets are zooming past the reach of artists who have no major record company backing. How does one compete? Before you can say MTV, video budgets have become as out of whack as the bloated, indulgent album budget of the seventies.

Unfortunately, there are probably more comparisons with the musically bankrupt times of the seventies than they care to admit. Top Ten-style shows for clips have arrived, and with them the "hit video" is born. These shows institutionalize the hit video the same way radio worships the hit song. Everyone's looking for hits, thereby squeezing out exposure for new artists. The sad fact is that there are few if any music-video shows that play clips purely on the merits of the video. *HM* judge Michael Shore said it best (by way of the Buggles), "Video re-invents the radio star."

Corollary diseases of the hit syndrome are also spreading. The cry "Make me a Mulcahy video!" is heard throughout the land in hopes of recreating the perfect clip. So, a new group of videomakers is ushered into the arena, promising to copy the style of the creative geniuses.

Lurking behind these issues of big budgets and formula videos is an even more explosive one. Censorship creeps into the picture as more artists experiment with R-rated videos. By what criteria are cablecasters judging clips too sexy or too violent for pay TV?

Consider: Cable MTV censors Bowie's *China Girl* but broadcasts *Halloween* twice a day. Is Bowie's butt morally wrong, but an ax in the face of a panty-clad girl, right? There is nothing in music-video as gratuitous as the beaver shots that cable allows on the Playboy Channel.

Finally, after a year of compliments and courting, the honeymoon's over between critics and clips. In addition to panning the plethora of junk videos that have appeared, critics are raising a fundamental question about the worth of music-video itself. Do clips detract from the experience of a song by providing listeners/viewers with too many concrete images? Or do they expand the boundaries of song interpretation and provide a unique musical experience? Traditional music journalists argue the former while video writers and young clipsters suggest the latter.

HM dedicates this year's awards to raising clip consciousness. Nineteen eighty-four's winners contribute a needed dash of fun to the medium. Bravo to their vaudvideo style!

—Alan Hecht
Chairman of the Judges

Clip Of The Year

You Might Think the Cars
Produced by Jeff Stein, Charlie Levi and Alex Weil
Directed by Charlie Levi, Alex Weil and Jeff Stein
Production: Charlex
Elektra Records

Other nominees: ***Rockit***, by Herbie Hancock. ***Hyperactive***, by Thomas Dolby. ***Burning Down the House***, by Talking Heads, and ***She Was Hot***, by the Rolling Stones

A girl sits alone in an unnatural, pastel colored living room. Clouds roam past a picture window. Suddenly the floor drops out. Furniture and girl tumble through the air like Dorothy in a Kansas twister. Car parts pass by as the picture falls. Girl, furniture and car parts fall into the open head of Rick Ocasek, lead singer of the Cars. In his glasses, the living room scene re-assembles. All this before the first lyric of ***You Might Think***.

"I don't want to shoot realism," declares Alex Weil, co-producer/director of ***You Might Think***. "It's not real on the screen so why not have something float? I do fantasy."

Weil, his partner Charlie Levi, their fun-loving production company Charlex and veteran video producer/director Jeff Stein, all collaborated with the Cars to produce this year's Clip of the Year. Ingenious fantasy, startling slapstick and state-of-the-art video optics drive this smashing clip, a perfect complement to ***HM***'s own demented sense of reality.

It started when the Cars and collaborator Stein decided to imbue ***You Might Think*** with the same brand of visual pranks they saw in the ***National Enquirer*** TV ads, created by Charlex.

Disregarding the mini-movie craze, the insane Charlex team ("controlled by two guys who are largely out of their mind," quips Weil) put in four intensive weekends of script writing, seven shooting days and over three hundred hours of post-production work to create a trendsetting video masterpiece.

The magic of ***You Might Think*** lies in its realism in the midst of fantasy. Attention to what Weil calls "reality details" (like shadows), perspective and light are key. With the mind always calculating, Weil believes that the absense of something as simple as a reflection (check out the mirror in the clip's opening) will cost a fantasy its visceral credibility.

Another aspect of the Charlex style is the cleanliness of their special effects, which Weil attributes to imaginative "technical cheats." The toughest effect was rotoscoping the opening and close of the piece, though each of the other effects, including placing O'Casek's head on a fly, twirling ham from a lipstick container and setting the band on a bar of soap, took eight hours or more to achieve. Sometimes they went too far.

"We originally had a dinosaur laying an egg and out pops one of the Cars, but a record company exec bounced the idea," laughs Weil.

For Charlex, who believe the best way to handle video is to "make it, show it, burn it," their next collaboration is with a "group we can't name who wears flower pots on their heads." (You've seen them in Honda ads, muff hunts. That's a combo sure to boggle minds.)

Meanwhile, no one's burning ***You Might Think***. A work of comic fantasy, ***HM***'s winning clip turns on a brand of video magic never before seen.

A.H.

Kevin Godley and Lol Creme: two brains on one head.

Director Of The Year

Kevin Godley and Lol Creme for *Rockit*.
Herbie Hancock
Produced by Lexa Godfrey and John Gaydon
Production: Medialabs Ltd.
Columbia Records

Other nominees: **Julien Temple**, for *She Was Hot*; **Daniel Kleinman**, for *Hyperactive*; **Russell Mulcahy** for *I Guess That's Why They Call It the Blues*; and **Tim Newman**, for *Gimme All Your Lovin'*.

What makes Kevin Godley and Lol Creme different from the present proliferation of music video directors? For one, there's two of them—"a two-headed monster," as they refer to themselves. Second, there's an outrageous sense of humor and stylistic experimentation very much in evidence in *Rockit*. But perhaps the most unusual thing about Godley and Creme is that they are *completely* self-taught video directors: they both received graphic arts degrees, and after college the two Manchester-born childhood mates turned to music. They founded the band 10cc (which ever in the seventies made what people called "cinematic music") but left the band in 1976 to form their own group Godley-Creme.

As a duo, they made their first clips for their U.K. hits, *An Englishman in New York* and *Wide Boys*. They went on to make some of the most imaginative pre-MTV clips including, Visage's *Mind of a Toy* and Duran Duran's first clip *Planet Earth*. Some of their best works are the Police's *Every Breath You Take*, *Synchronicity II*, and Duran Duran's X-rated *Girls on Film*. Their clips may vary stylistically, but they have this in common: you don't find stories or clichés in them—you find music and pictures working off each other. Talk about synchronicity! I interviewed them separately, but you'd never know it by their responses.

—Merle Ginsberg

HM: Where on Earth did you come up with the idea for *Rockit*?

LC: We saw an arts magazine program on TV and one of the segments showed the work of a sculptor named Jim Whiting. *Those robots*. We thought "These things are *amazing*." Then we filed the information away in our minds. A couple of weeks later, Herbie's track showed up at the office and *immediately* upon hearing it, we *both* thought of those robots! The sculptor was into it, and we put the thing together very quickly, as most videos are put together.

KG: Whiting lives among these things: arms and torsos flailing about his house. That's what inspired us to put them into a domestic English setting. I mean, you see a terraced house, and then there's mayhem inside—that's *so* English. There was real mayhem on the set also. Those robots are a bit unpredictable. They can be operated by computer or by compressed air; we opted for compressed air so Jim was operating them off-camera and always just dodging out of the frame in time.

HM: How did you make them dance?

LC: In the edit. We enjoy editing. The record had scratching on it, so we wanted to "scratch" the video. But you can't make tape move backwards. So we had the entire film printed backwards, to do the visual equivalent of scratching. We, in fact, became the choreographers.

KG: We edited two frames forward, two frames backward—it was a hell of an edit.

HM: It's the first video where the visuals move in a musical way. You've created rhythmic rather than narrative images.

LC: I don't know if it's the first—all good videos have *that* in common. If they don't, they're *crap*. We've done that from day one.

KG: We avoid telling the story like the plague. The record tells the story. The visuals give *added* stimulus. The visuals for *Rockit* are so right because they capture the mood of the track. If you get the mood, you can't miss.

LC: You know those robots have names. You'll be pleased to know the girl with the popping eyes is "Veronica."

KG: And the bird that beaks at the window actually makes a noise—a horrible honking noise. Those things are grotesque. Herbie *loves* them, though, and of course, they've been touring with him. They're treated like real stars on the road.

HM: Were you conscious of using *robots* with an electronically-oriented song?

LC: Not *conscious*—but instinctively, the two seemed to go well together. Really, these robots are the antithesis of "digital funk"—they're more like scarecrows. They're punk, more punky than high gloss. It's the way they move—insanely.

HM: Did Herbie mind getting stuck on the telly in the clip?

LC: No—he was delighted. He accepted the definite visual limitations of somebody who plays keyboards.

HM: Isn't it difficult having two people direct one piece?

LC: It *would* be if those two people were contradicting each other and forever arguing. But we have this really odd feeling that we're *one person*. We're both half a person—we've been working together for twenty-four years.

KG: Working together is a strength—it's good to have a person to lean on. There's lots to do on a shoot and we cover each other's asses. We *do* disagree—but that's creative. If one of us has an "alternative" idea, he has to prove it's worth trying. When we argue, it's like arguing with yourself.

Best Solo Performance

Neil Young in *Wonderin'*
Produced by Gordon Lewis and Debbie Kermode
Directed by Tim Pope
Production: GLO Productions
Geffen Records

Other nominees: **Cyndi Lauper** in *Girls Just Wanna Have Fun*; **Ray Davies** in *Come Dancin'*; **Tony Powers** in *Don't Nobody Move (This is a Hold-up)*; and **Al Yankovic** in *Eat It*

***Wonderin'*: How could you say "no" to this mad mug?**

Best Group Performance

UB40 in *Red Red Wine*
Produced by Rob Small
Directed by Bernard Rose
Production: Stagefright Productions Ltd.
A&M Records

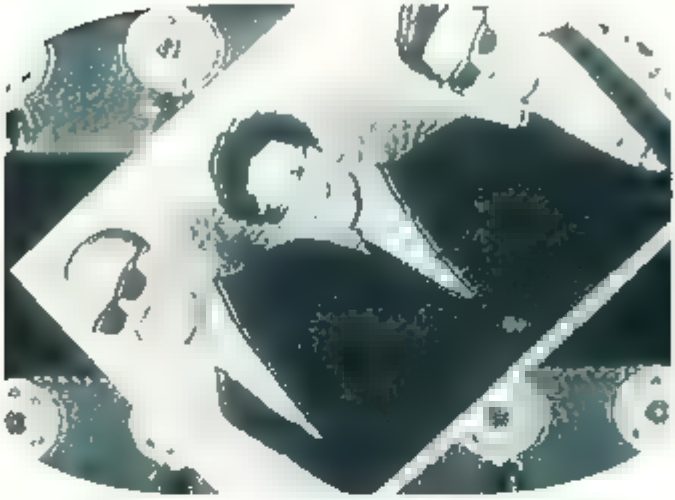
Other nominees: **the B-52s** in *Legal Tender*; **Twisted Sister** in *You Can't Stop Rock 'n' Roll*; **the Rolling Stones** in *She Was Hot*; and **the Cure** in *Love Cats*

***Red Red Wine*: UB40 hoists one in this intriguing black-and-white adventure.**

Best Editing

Pierce Rafferty and Margie Crimmins
for *Jack the Ripper* the Raybeats
Produced and Directed by Rafferty and Crimmins
Shamachue Records

Other nominees: **Rob Aiken** for *Rockit*; **Lenny Friedman** for *I Love LA*; **Bill Weber and Danny Rosenberg** for *You Might Think*; and **Warren Lynch** for *I Guess That's Why They Call It the Blues*



***Jack the Ripper*: Found footage and fifties fun in this fast cut frolic.**

Best Cinematography

Daniel Pearl for *Every Breath You Take*
the Police
Produced by Fiona Fitzherbert
Directed by Kevin Godley and Lol Creme
Production by F&F Productions
A&M Records

Other nominees: **John Metcalfe** for *I Guess That's Why They Call It the Blues*; **Lazlo Kovacs** for *This Time*; **Sid McArtney** for *Red Red Wine*; and **Steve Tickner and Peter Christopherson** for *In The Mood*

***Every Breath You Take*: Daniel Pearl's haunting lighting and grey-tone imagery leaves us, well, breathless.**

Best Art Direction

Kevin Godley & Lol Creme for *Rockit*. Herbie Hancock; Robots by Jim Whiting

Other nominees: **Mick Haggerty & C.D. Taylor** for *Song for a Future Generation*; **Al McDowell** for *Safety Dance*; **Joan Logue** for *Renee & Georgette Magritte with Their Dog after the War*; and **Kim Colfax** for *Dancin' with Myself*

***Rockit*: Even Lucas couldn't get R2D2 on the dance floor.**

Best Special Effects

Charlex for *You Might Think*, the Cars

Other nominees: **David Yardley and David Brockhurst** for *Hyperactive*; **Joan Logue and Broadway Video** for *Renee & Georgette Magritte with Their Dog after the War*; **Daniel Swietlik** for *Jam the Motho*; and **Metavision** for *Dr. Detroit*

***You Might Think*: super special effects and hilarious horror keep the Cars running.**

Best Choreography

Arlene Phillips for *I'm Still Standing*, Elton John
Produced by Jackqui Byford
Directed by Russell Mulcahy
Production: MGMM
Geffen Records

Other nominees: **Toni Basil** for *Over My Head*; **Michael Peters** for *Beat It*; **Barbara Allen** for *The Dominatrix Sleeps Tonight*; and **Kevin Godley and Lol Creme** for *Rockit*

***I'm Still Standing*: Legs, butts, and bathing suit ballet swing together on the beach of Saint Tropez.**

Best Animation

Peter Conn, Jonathan Leach, and Overton Lloyd for *Atomic Dog*, George Clinton
Produced by Coco Conn
Directed by Peter Conn
Production: Homer and Associates
Capitol Records

Other nominees: **New York Institute of Technology** for *Adventures in Success*; **John Sanborn and Dean Winkler** for *Act III*; **Steve Blevins, Mike Kaluta, and Claudia Steinberg** for *Don't Answer Me*; and **Mick Haggerty and C.D. Taylor** for *Family Man*

***Atomic Dog*: Electric canine boogey springs from video game madness.**

Best Extended Play

We're All Devo, Devo
Produced by Chuck Statler
Directed by Gerald V. Casale
Sony Video LP

Other nominees: ***Perfect Lives***, Robert Ashley; ***Girl Groups***, various artists; ***Don't Nobody Move***, Tony Powers; and ***The High Road***, Roxy Music

***We're All Devo*: It's the kookiest.**

Hall of Fame

Dead End Street: the Kinks (1966), director and producer unknown.
Happy Jack: the Who (1967), produced and directed by Michael Lindsay-Hogg.
Strawberry Fields Forever: the Beatles (1967), directed by Peter Goldmann, produced by the Beatles.
Lick My Decals Off, Baby: Promo, Captain Beefheart [Don Van Vliet] and his Magic Band (1970), directed by Don Van Vliet, produced by Warner Reprise Records.
Ralph Records Video Vol. 1 (1983), directed by Graeme Whifler and the Residents, produced by the Cryptic Corp.

By now, it's the conventional music-video wisdom that in the ancient days of the sixties and early seventies, what clips there were consisted inevitably of corny, straight-forward lip-synched performances. For the most part, that still holds—but this year's Hall of Fame clips pointed to a new direction for music-video. Each of them had a solid *conceptual* basis and skirted the typical performance scenarios of their contemporaries.

Dead End Street, the Kinks

The Kinks' 1966 *Dead End Street* creates an ironic, atmospheric, black-comic complement to the lumpen existentialism of the lyrics rather than resorting to the then-typical straight lip-synched performance or band-on-the-beach-or-in-a-park set-up. The Kinks appear as Dickensian undertakers, complete with long black coats and stovepipe hats, wheeling a coffin through the streets of London; at one point Ray Davies—in an early indication of the thespian ability he would show so well in such recent clips as "Come Dancing"—also portrays the just-widowed housewife into whose home the coffin is wheeled. Most significantly, there is *no lip-synching* except for the group shots of "Hey!" on the choruses, and there isn't an unplugged guitar in sight.

The Who's 1967 *Happy Jack* is markedly similar, with the band playing bumbling safe-crackers in a comic silent-movie-style caper. Again, there is absolutely no lip-synching and no mock-playing of instruments. This is also a far less literal visualization of the song than *Dead End Street* was.

Happy Jack, the Who

Strawberry Fields Forever, the Beatles

Later in 1967, the Beatles, at the peak of their psychedelic period, upped the aesthetic ante by collaborating with Swedish avant-garde filmmaker Peter Goldmann on promo films for "Penny Lane" and "Strawberry Fields Forever." Rather than using the clips as adjuncts to touring, the Beatles shipped them out to major U.S. TV networks *instead* of touring. *Strawberry Fields Forever* in particular shows how the leading edge of sixties music-video had moved on from non-lip-synched literal narrative into a more rarefied realm of non-narrative abstraction, with its dislocated sets (an upright piano in an empty field), radical jump-cuts, cryptic dissolves to extreme close-ups of the Beatles' faces, and such special effects as slow- and fast-motion, and bleeding superimpositions. *Strawberry Fields Forever* at least tried to effect a non-literal *mood* appropriate to the song's ominous, woozily ethereal, aura.

Lick My Decals Off, Baby, Captain Beefheart

In 1970, Captain Beefheart (a.k.a. Don Van Vliet) conceived and directed a sixty-second black-and-white commercial for his album *Lick My Decals Off, Baby*. No station would air it, accusing it of excessive strangeness and the album title of obscenity. Looking at the clip today (it's in the permanent music-video collection of New York's Museum of Modern Art) it's easy to see why people reacted so strongly. Like Beefheart's music, the promo spot is a startlingly original crazy-quilt of idiosyncratically skewed juxtapositions, and hardly for the meek: it's a series of cuts between various static extreme close-ups (of hooded figures mysteriously working egg-beaters and flour-sifters, a foot tipping a bowl of thick white batter s-l-o-w-l-y over the white line of a highway), all backed by the exuberant voice-over of an apparently unwitting Don Pardo-style announcer.

Ralph Records Video Volume 1

Now we jump-cut to late last year, when San Francisco's Ralph Records released *Ralph Records Video Volume 1* [by mail order only for about $30 from Ralph Records, 109 Minna #391, San Francisco, CA 94105], the first long-play music-video program inducted into *HM*'s Hall of Fame. This collection of circa-1980 clips by such Ralph artists as the Residents (with their four *One-Minute Movies*, plus their self-directed 1975 *Third Reich 'n' Roll* clip—probably the most invigoratingly *outre* performance clip ever made), Tuxedomoon, MX-80 Sound, Snakefinger, and Renaldo and the Loaf (whose terrifying child-abduction triptych *Songs for Swinging Larvae* is based on an actual California kidnapping case) is simply the most relentlessly original, inspired, and unique music video document we've ever seen. Most rock videos feature oodles of provocative "surreal" and/or "bizzarre" imagery, but the Residents refuse to rationalize the strangeness in lowest-common-denominator terms. Where most rock videos excuse their contrived weirdness with the "it was all just a dream" cliché, Ralph director Graeme Whifler in effect hangs a sign on this videocassette that reads, "Enter—If You Dare."

HM recognizes this year's Hall of Fame clips for challenging the status quo with maverick inventiveness and foreshadowing the future of music video.

—Michael Shore

Credits and Acknowledgements

Judges: Merle Ginsberg, Steven Maloff, Michael Shore, Julie Simmons-Lynch, Lou Stathis
Chairman, Alan Hecht
Thanks to Ed Steinberg, Cathy Jablow, and the rest of Rockamerica, James Kambach for his music-video history lessons, and Vikki Rose at the Howard Bloom organization.

Photographs by Elena Seibert

Original storyboard of *You Might Think* courtesy Charlex.

...Don't Get Caught Without Your HEAVY METAL!

Bernie Wrightson's Hanover Fiste and his never-do-well accomplice Captain Sternn. You've seen them in the magazine, you've seen them on the golden screen, now see them coming and going. This durable four-color cotton T-shirt is a must for the spring season.

The newest edition of HM fantasy wear—our silver satin-like jacket equipped with a cotton lining, and front pockets, too.

The original HM T-shirt comes in red and black and is made of cotton-blend. (Get more for your money that way!)

It's a-buckle in the name. Each weighty HM bronze belt buckle is 3¼" × 2" and will fit any standard belt.

Now in! *Heavy Metal*'s new phosphorescent T-shirts! These all-cotton tees are available in "Muscle" (shown) or regular style black shirts. Each are $8.00 (including postage and handling). Order today! You never know when there might be another blackout and your HM T-shirt would be the only light source for miles around!

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Captain Sternn T-shirts: small, medium, large at $7.50 each
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All prices above include postage and handling.
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Address

City State Zip

If you don't wish to cut the coupon in this ad but do wish to order, please print or type all applicable info on a separate piece of paper, and enclose it with a check or money order. And you didn't think we were nice guys.

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TOR JOHNSON'S HOLLYWOOD TOUR

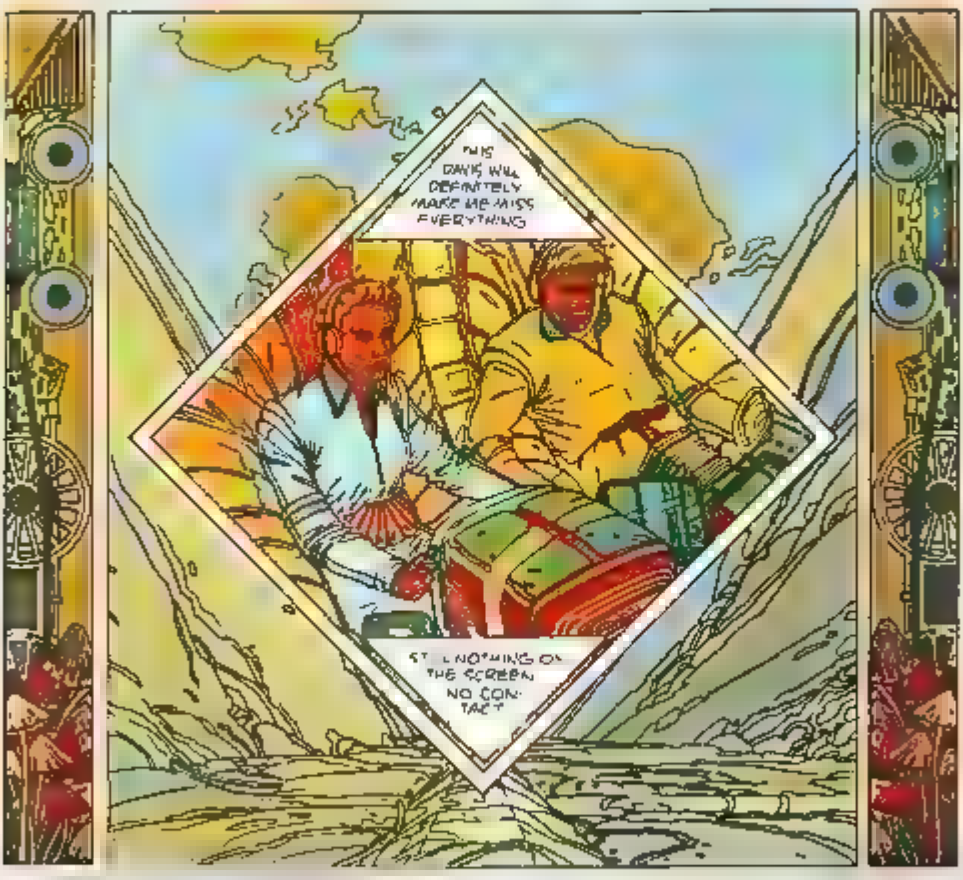
THE RAILWAYS

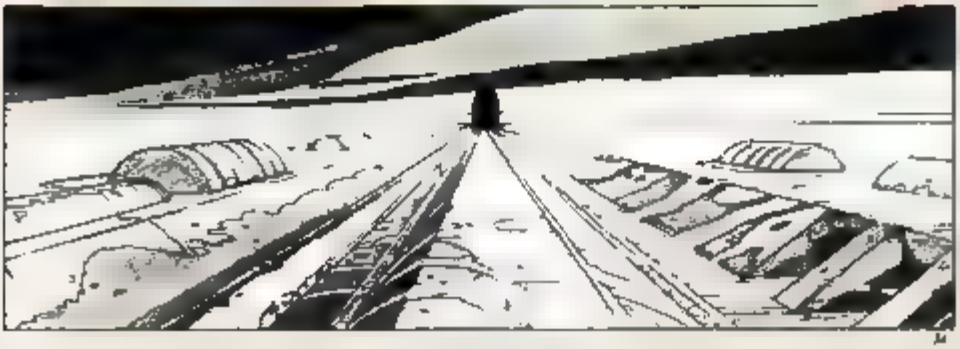
BY FRANÇOIS SCHUITEN AND CLAUDE RENARD

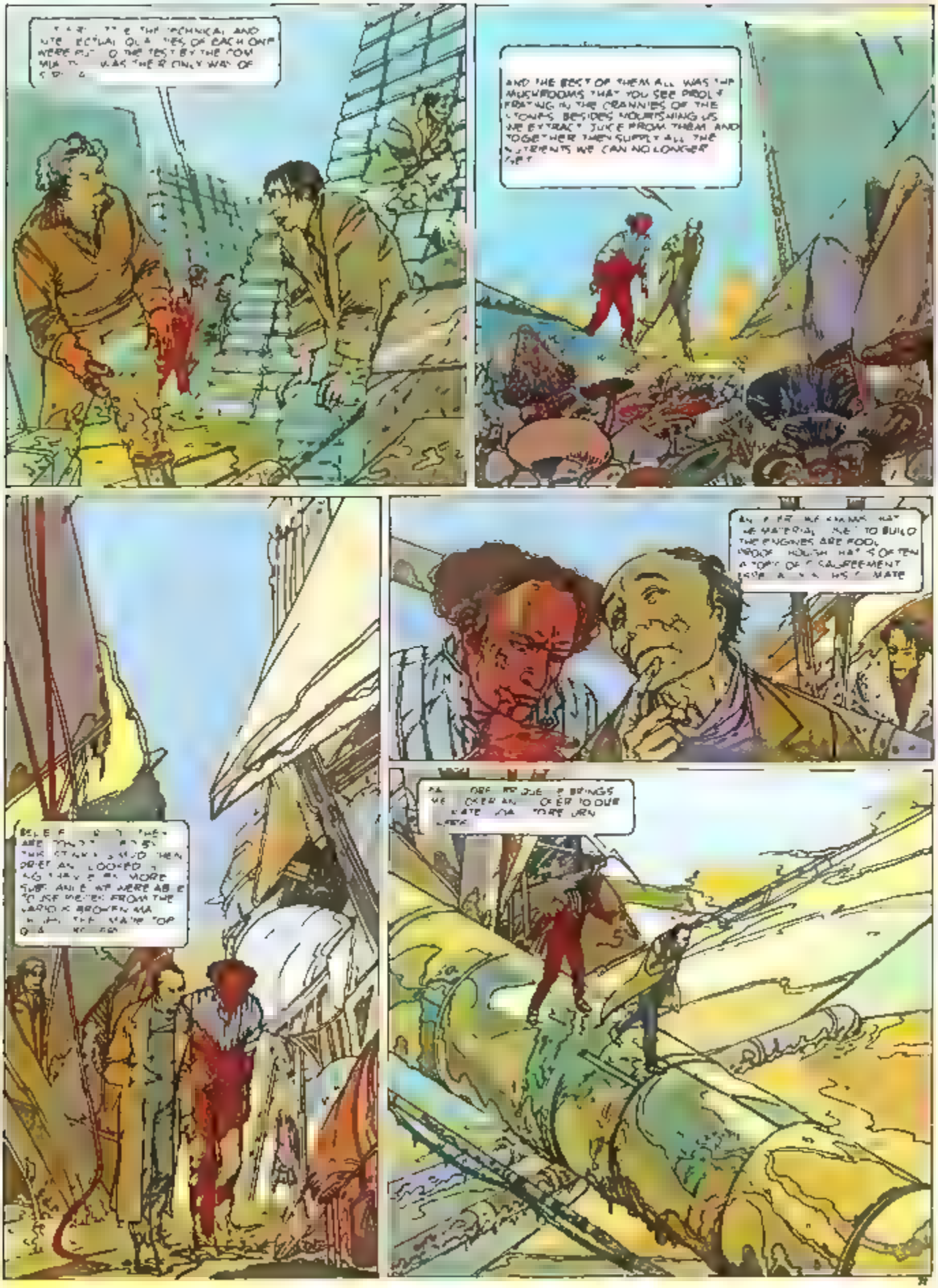
THE STEAM ENGINE

THE MONOTONOUS MAN WITH THE SUNKEN CHEEKS DIDN'T LEAVE A MOMENT OF RELIEF TO WILLIAM DAVIS, WHO ALMOST COLLAPSED UNDER THE WEIGHT OF THE REVELATIONS. THE CITY HAD SHOVED HIM ASIDE. LIKE HIS PREDECESSOR HE SURPRISINGLY, HAD NO REACTION. CONSTERNATION HAD TAKEN PRECEDENCE OVER HATE.

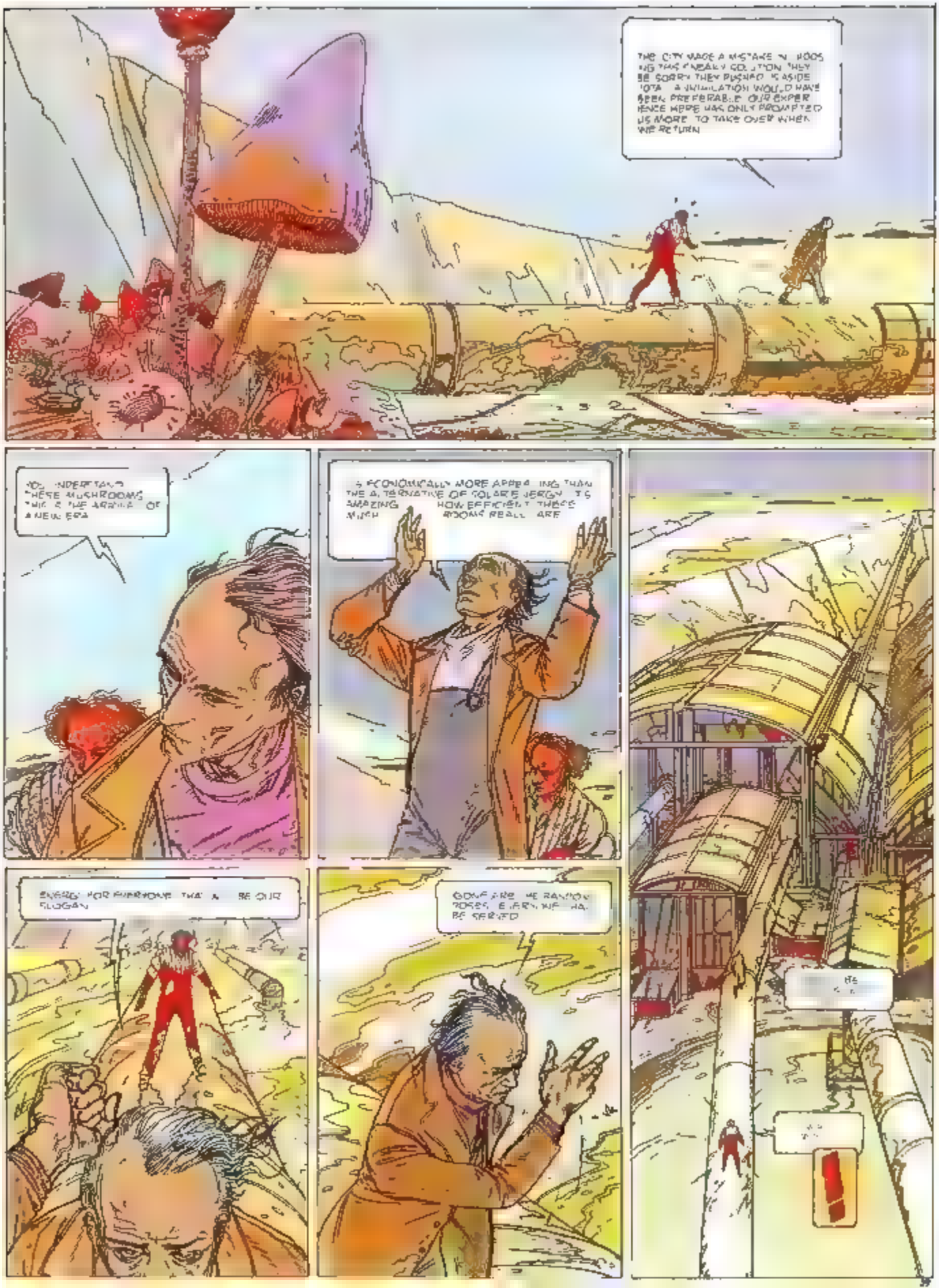
FRANK MOOSE PRESSED THE TV COMMAND BUTTON. THE ANNOUNCER'S EXPRESSIONLESS FACE CAME ON THE SCREEN. HE WAS REPORTING THE LATEST NEWS. FRANK WAS FURIOUS. HIS WORK NEVER PREVENTED HIM FROM FOLLOWING THE GAMES. BUT NOW IT WAS HALF TIME AND IT WAS CLEAR THAT HE WOULD NOT BE BACK FOR THE END OF THE MATCH.



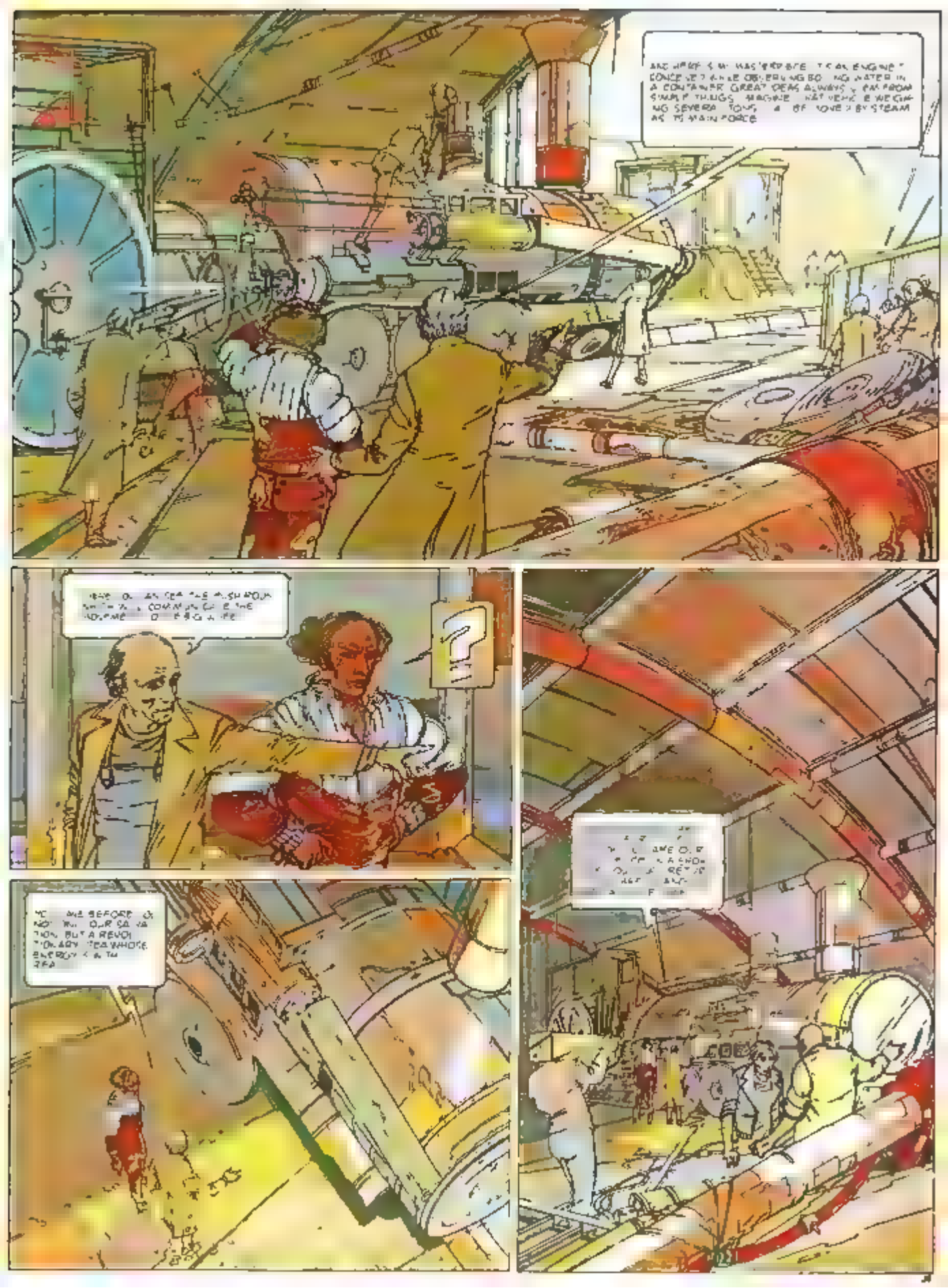



AND THE BEST OF THEM ALL WAS THE MUSHROOMS THAT YOU SEE PROLIFERATING IN THE CRANNIES OF THE TOWERS. BESIDES NOURISHING US, WE EXTRACT JUICE FROM THEM AND TOGETHER THEY SUPPLY ALL THE NUTRIENTS WE CAN NO LONGER GET

THE STEAM ENGINE


THE CITY MADE A MISTAKE IN DOOSING THIS PLEASANT CREATION THEY'LL BE SORRY THEY PUSHED ASIDE TOTAL ANNIHILATION WOULD HAVE BEEN PREFERABLE OUR EXPERIENCE HERE HAS ONLY PROMPTED US MORE TO TAKE OVER WHEN WE RETURN
YOU UNDERSTAND THESE MUSHROOMS THEY'RE THE HARBINGER OF A NEW ERA
ECONOMICALLY MORE APPEALING THAN THE ALTERNATIVE OF SOLARE ENERGY IT'S AMAZING HOW EFFICIENT THESE MUSH ROOMS REALLY ARE
ENERGY FOR EVERYONE THAT'S BE OUR SLOGAN
GONE ARE THE RANCID ROSES, FERN AND HAS BE SERVED

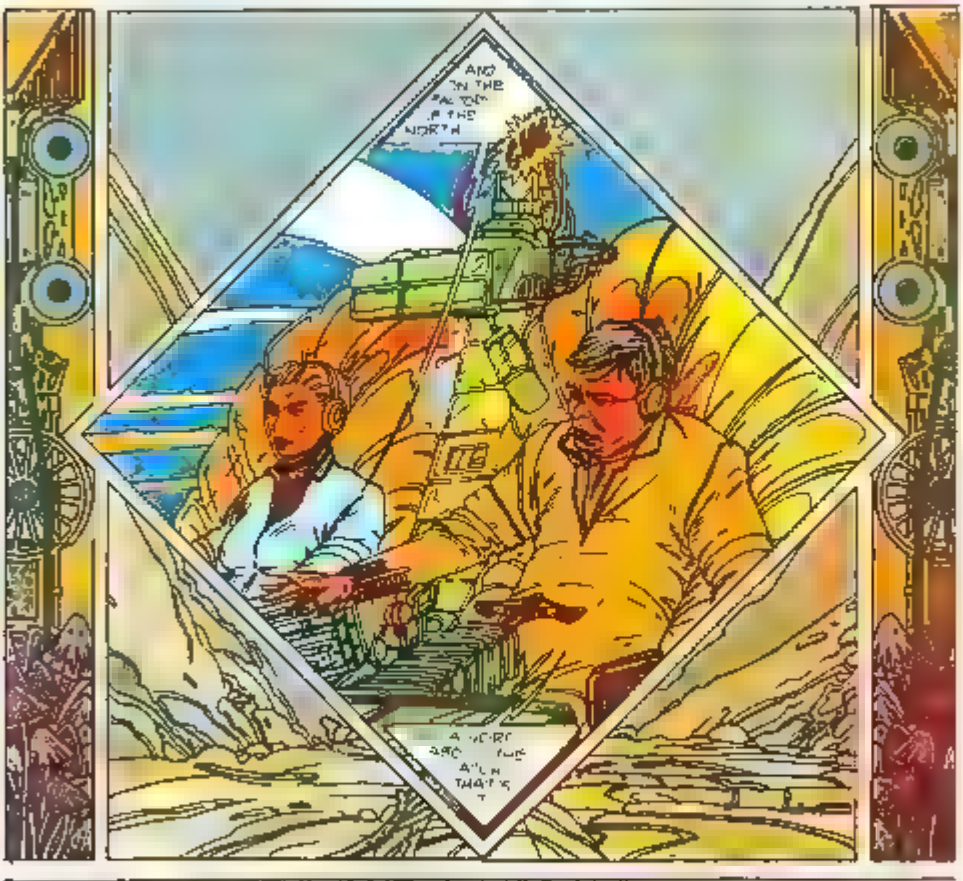
THE STEAM ENGINE

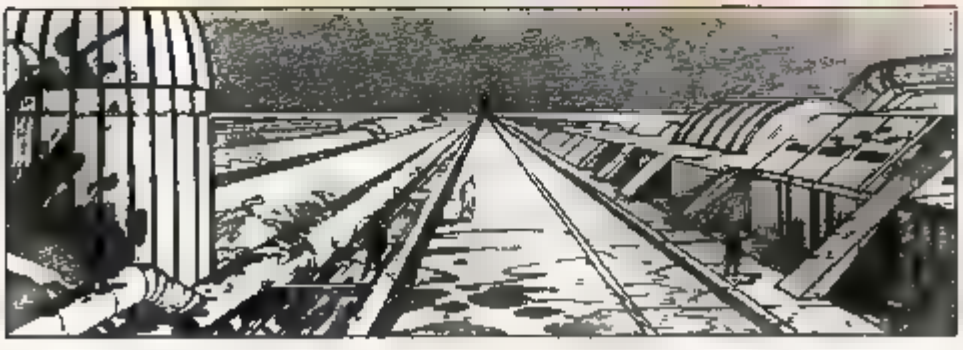


THE STEAM ENGINE

THERE WAS QUITE A DISTANCE BETWEEN LIFE AND THE FALLING OFF POINT. IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO REJOIN ANY CENTER WITHOUT A VEHICLE. THE OLD MAN, AT THE PEAK OF HIS EXCITEMENT, MOVED FORWARD GESTURING, FOLLOWED BY DAVIS DISHEARTENED BY HIS DESTINY AND THE MENTAL HEALTH OF HIS INTERLOCUTOR.

MOREOVER, THE ATTITUDE OF HIS WIFE WAS UNCERTAIN. FOR A WHILE, SHE HAD LED A FAIRLY AMBIGUOUS LIFE, WORKING CLOSELY WITH THE RULERS, WHICH LED TO A LOT OF GOSSIPING IN THE UNION CIRCLES.

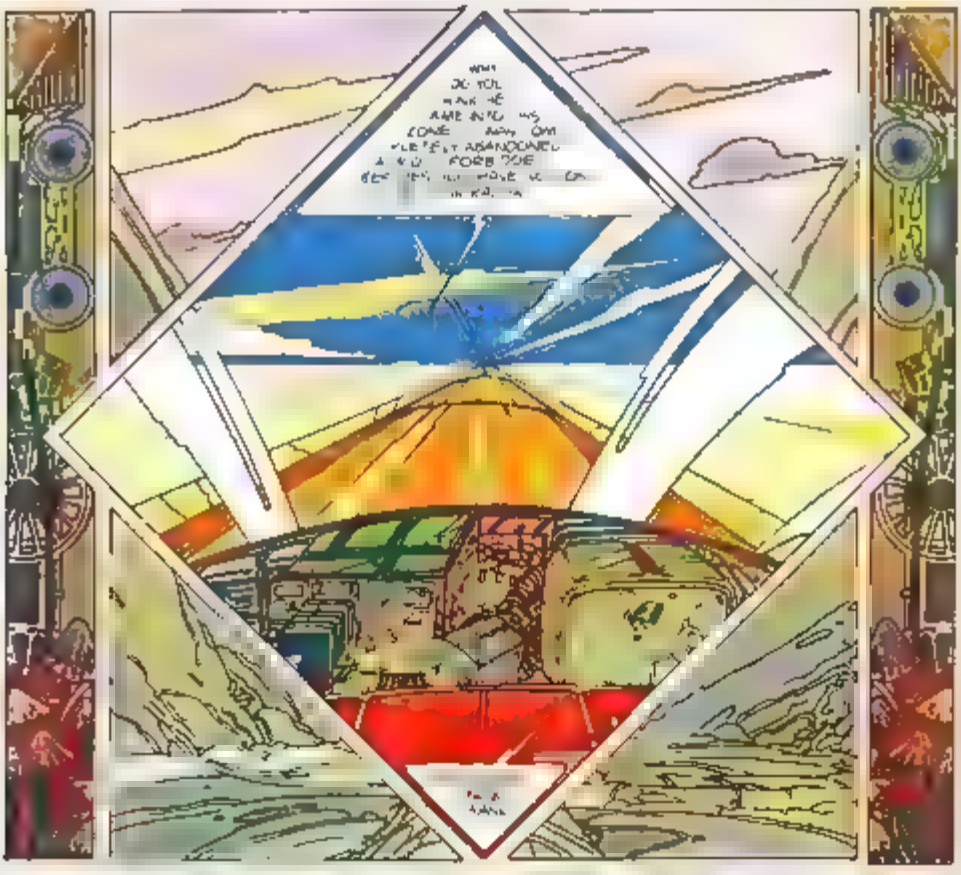


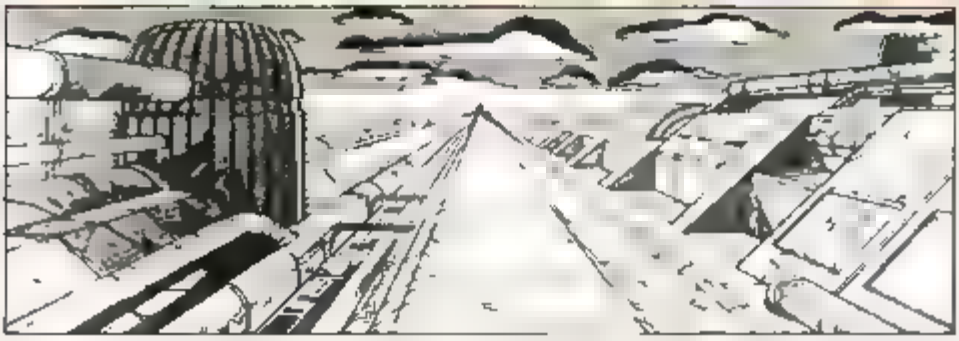


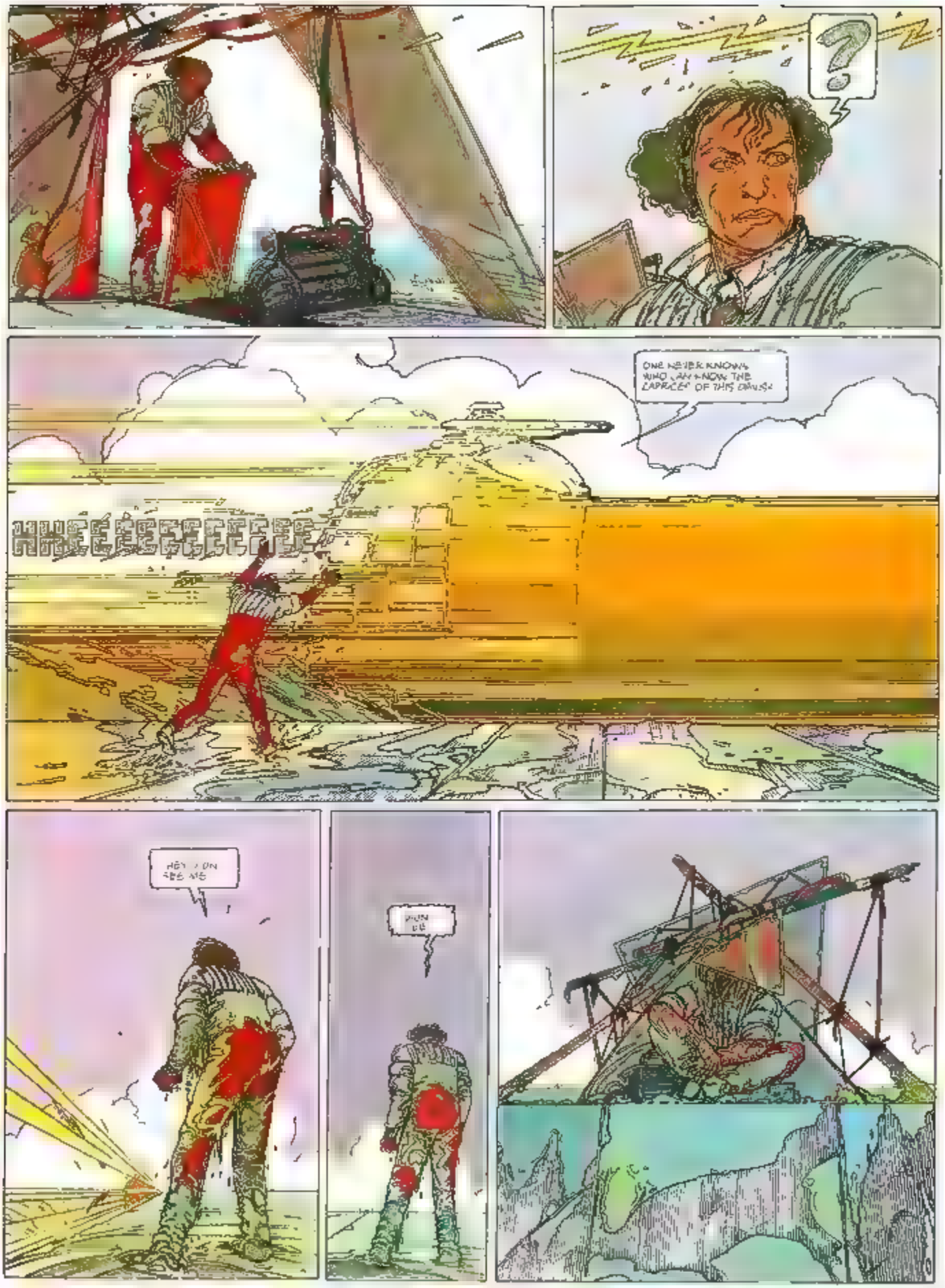
YOU ARE COMPLETELY AT FAULT WHEN IT COMES TO YOUR MUSHROOM BOILER. I WILL JUST HAVE TO WAIT. STOP ONE OF THE MACHINES. IF YOU HAVE TO. BESIDES, THE SEARCH IS UNDOUBTEDLY ORGANIZED. I'M GOING BACK.
YOU WILL NEVER UNDERSTAND. YOUR NO VEHICLE EVER COMES BY THIS STUMP EXCEPT TO BE ELIMINATED FOREVER.
I DON'T GIVE A DAMN. DO WHAT YOU WANT. I'M GOING BACK TO MY STUMP
HEY, YOU THERE!
!
DROP THAT!
DROP THAT, I SAID!

THE STEAM ENGINE

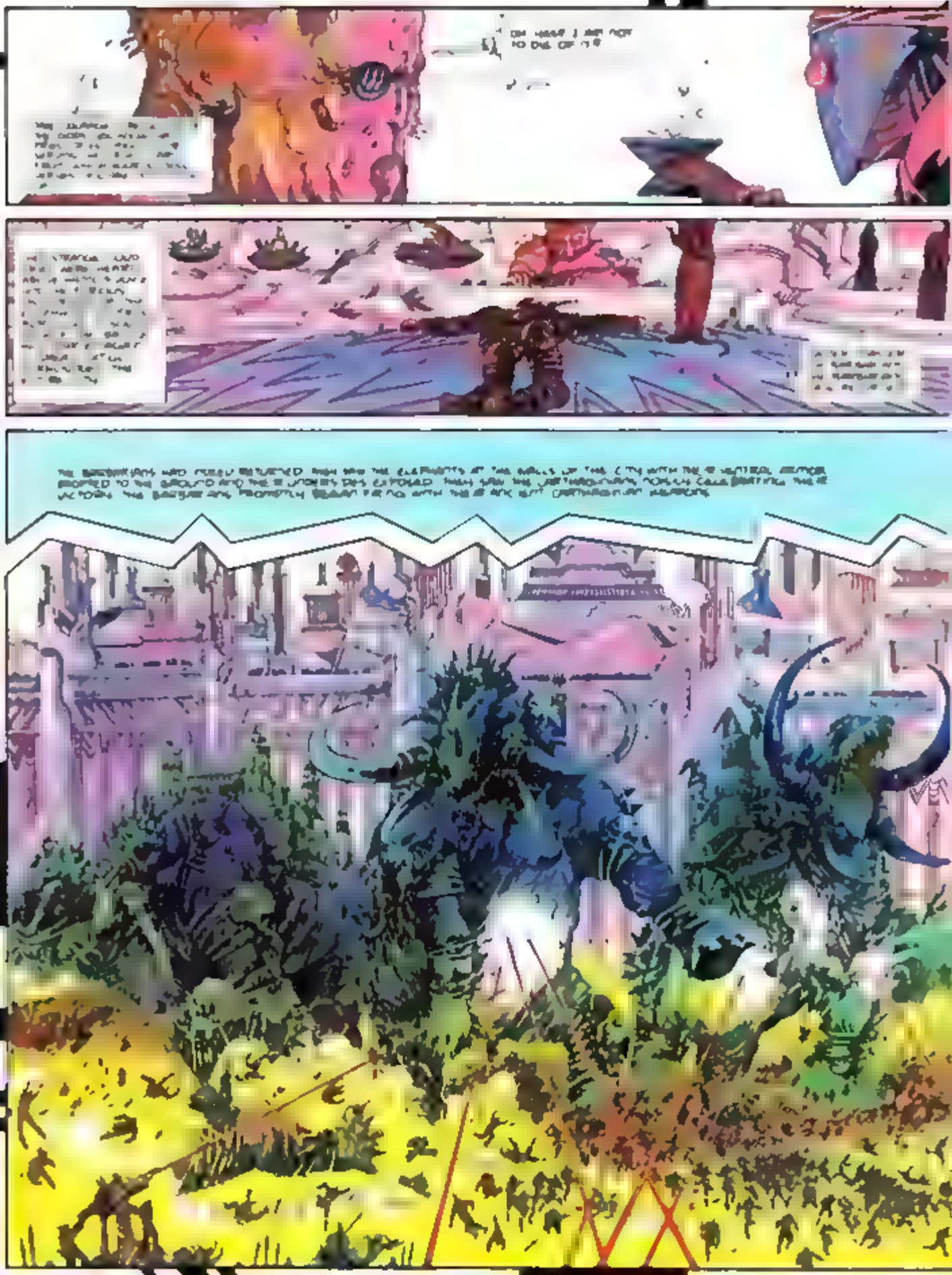
AND THE REPORTING ON THE DAY'S AFFAIR GAVE WAY TO OTHER NEWS EQUALLY AS BANAL. FRANK WANTED THEM TO GET BACK TO THE BASE. THEIR MISSION WAS A FAILURE. AND THIS WAS NOT THE FIRST TIME THAT SUCH A THING HAD HAPPENED.
THEY HAD REDONE THE PATH PROGRAMMED BY LEWIS AND THE SOUTHERN FACTORY PERFECTLY. ALICIA, HOWEVER, OBSESSED "FOR HIS COMPANION'S SAKE" TO RETURN TOWARDS THE FORGOTTEN SLUMP THAT WAS KING CHARLEMAGNE, BECAUSE OF ITS RECENT FATE. BUT FRANK ACCEPTED THE SITUATION, JUST TO PLEASE HER.






?
ONE NEVER KNOWS WHO CAN KNOW THE CAPRICES OF THIS CRUISE
AHHH

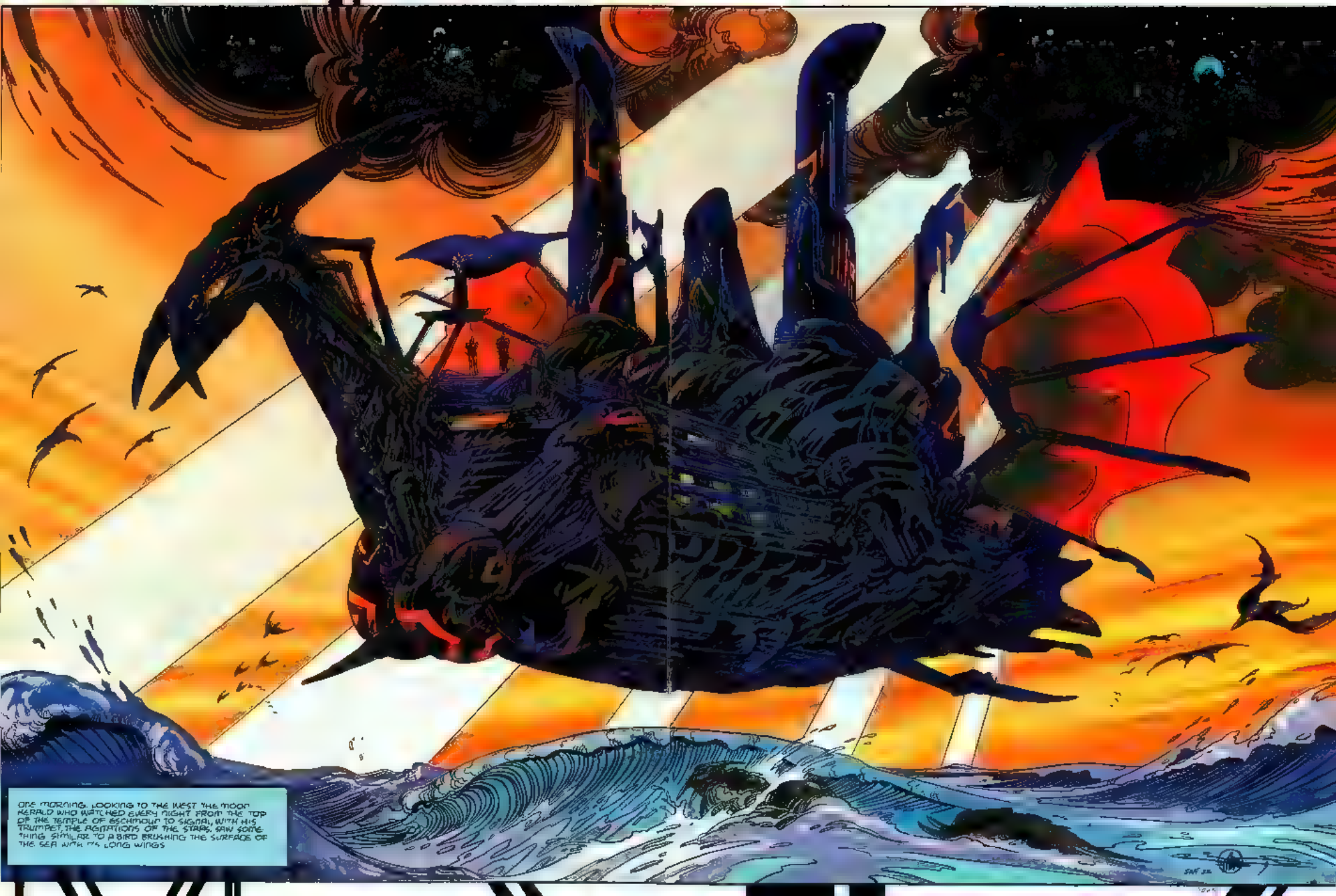
JUNE 2050
©1984 J D KING
2000 M.P.H.
MEET GEORGE JETSON!
JANE HIS WIFE!
HERESH TA JANE
SLURK!
DAUGHTER JUDY!
DUH UH OH, A COP!
SPEED 2,000 M.P.H.
RRRRRRRR
HEY YOUSE PULL OVER!
AW RATS!
DUH OKAY!
POLICE
WHAMO!!
TOO SHAT.
HIS BOY, ELROY!
R.I.P.

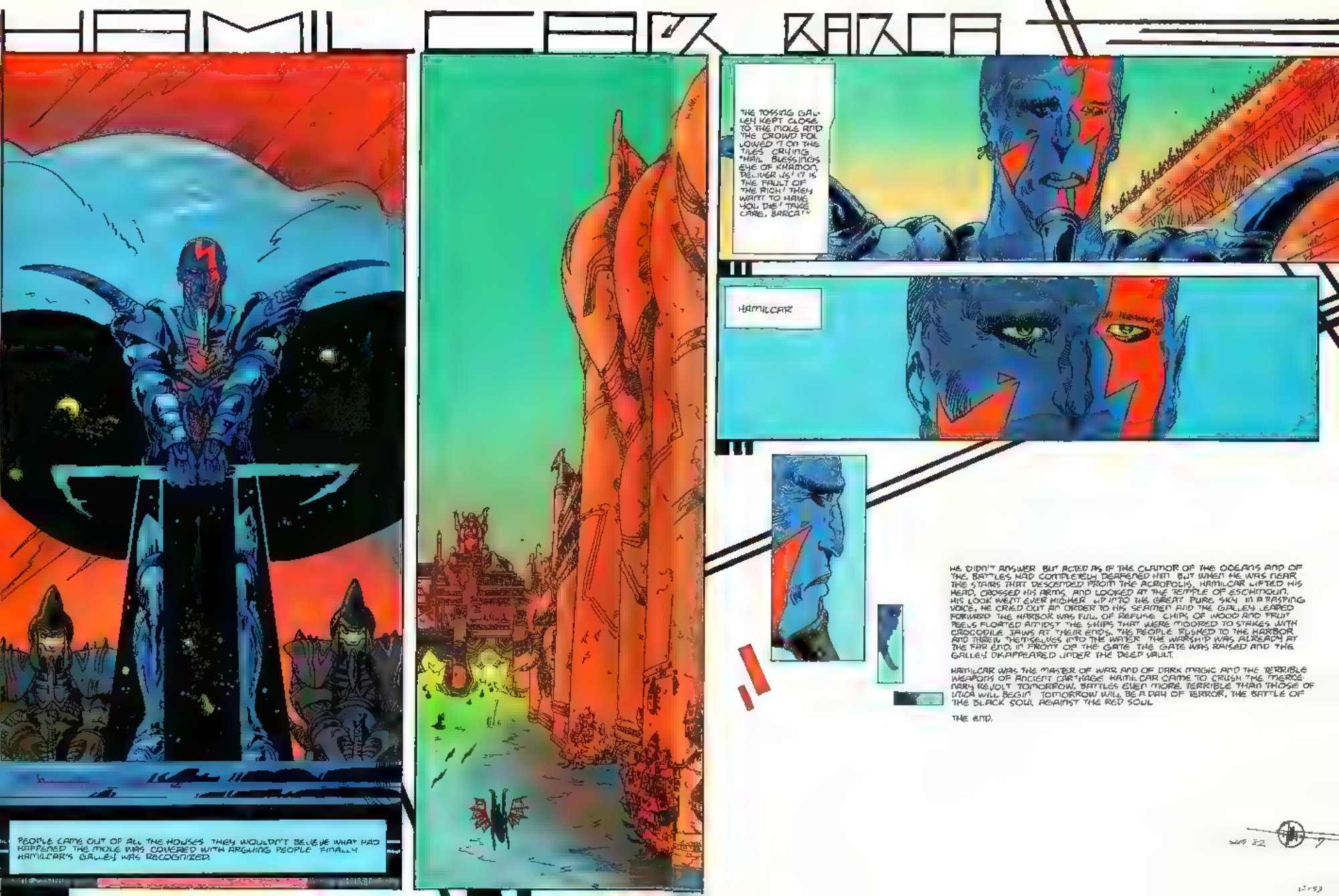


NOW AND THEN FROM THE WEST ONE COULD SEE THE ARRIVAL OF NUMEROUS MERCENARIES AT THE SAME TIME MARK HAWK AND HIS TEN GIANS APPEARED JUMPING OVER BUSHES AND RAVINES THEY CHASED DOWN THE FUGITIVES LIKE HOUNDS HUNTING HARES. THIS CHANGE OF FORTUNE INTERRUPTED THE SUPPETE. HE CRIED OUT FOR SOMEONE TO COME HELP HIM OUT OF THE BATH. SLOANE, THE RED DRAGON WAS THERE

HANNO. THE FLIGHT TOWARDS CARTHAGE

CARTHAGE DID NOT HAVE THE STRENGTH TO BE ANGRY WITH HANNO. THEY HAD LOST 800,972 SILVER SHEKELS, 15,623 GOLD SHEKELS, EIGHTEEN ELEPHANTS, FOURTEEN MEMBERS OF THE GRAND COUNCIL, THREE HUNDRED OF THE RICH, EIGHT THOUSAND CITIZENS, CORN FOR THREE MONTHS, AND ALL OF THEIR WAR MACHINES. THE ARMY OF ANTHARITUS NOW EXTENDED FROM TUNIS TO RHADES. FROM THE HEIGHT OF THE ACROPOLIS LONG TRAILS OF SMOKE REACHING TO THE SKY COULD BE SEEN. THE CASTLES OF THE WEALTHY WERE BURNING. ONE MAN ALONE WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SAVE THE REPUBLIC. THEY REGRETTED NOT HAVING RECOGNIZED HIM, AND THE PEACE PARTY ITSELF PRAYED FOR THE RETURN OF HAMILCAR.
THE SIGHT OF ZAIMPH HAD STUNNED SALAMMBO. AT NIGHT SHE BELIEVED SHE HEARD THE STEPS OF THE GODDESS, AND SHE WOULD WAKE UP SCREAMING IN TERROR. EVERY DAY SHE SENT FOOD IN TO THE TEMPLES. TAANACH WAS TIRED OF EXECUTING HER ORDERS, AND SCHAHABARIM NO LONGER LEFT HER.
DOM
49


ONE MORNING, LOOKING TO THE WEST THE MOON HERALD WHO WATCHED EVERY NIGHT FROM THE TOP OF THE TEMPLE OF ESCHMOUN TO SIGNAL, WITH HIS TRUMPET, THE AGITATIONS OF THE STARS, SAW SOME THING SIMILAR TO A BIRD BRUSHING THE SURFACE OF THE SEA WITH ITS LONG WINGS


HAMILCAR BARCA
PEOPLE CAME OUT OF ALL THE HOUSES. THEY WOULDN'T BELIEVE WHAT HAD HAPPENED. THE MOLE WAS COVERED WITH ARGUING PEOPLE. FINALLY HAMILCAR'S GALLEY WAS RECOGNIZED.
THE TOSSING GALLEY KEPT CLOSE TO THE MOLE AND THE CROWD FOLLOWED IT ON THE TILES, CRYING "HAIL, BLESSINGS, EVE OF KHAMON, DELIVER US! IT IS THE FAULT OF THE RICH! THEY WANT TO HANG YOU, DIE! TAKE CARE, BARCA!"
HAMILCAR
HE DIDN'T ANSWER. BUT ACTED AS IF THE CLAMOR OF THE OCEANS AND OF THE BATTLES HAD COMPLETELY DEAFENED HIM. BUT WHEN HE WAS NEAR THE STAIRS THAT DESCENDED FROM THE ACROPOLIS, HAMILCAR LIFTED HIS HEAD, CROSSED HIS ARMS, AND LOOKED AT THE TEMPLE OF ESCHMOUN. HIS LOOK WENT EVER HIGHER, UP INTO THE GREAT PURE SKY. IN A RASPING VOICE, HE CRIED OUT AN ORDER TO HIS SEAMEN AND THE GALLEY LEAPED FORWARD. THE HARBOR WAS FULL OF REFUSE: CHIPS OF WOOD AND FRUIT PEELS FLOATED AMIDST THE SHIPS THAT WERE MOORED TO STAKES WITH CROCODILE JAWS AT THEIR ENDS. THE PEOPLE RUSHED TO THE HARBOR AND THREW THEMSELVES INTO THE WATER. THE WARSHIP WAS ALREADY AT THE FAR END, IN FRONT OF THE GATE. THE GATE WAS RAISED AND THE GALLEY DISAPPEARED UNDER THE DEEP VAULT.
HAMILCAR WAS THE MASTER OF WAR AND OF DARK MAGIC AND THE TERRIBLE WEAPONS OF ANCIENT CARTHAGE. HAMILCAR CAME TO CRUSH THE MERCENARY REVOLT. TOMORROW, BATTLES EVEN MORE TERRIBLE THAN THOSE OF UTICA WILL BEGIN. TOMORROW WILL BE A DAY OF TERROR, THE BATTLE OF THE BLACK SOUL AGAINST THE RED SOUL.
THE END.
WA 52
7

The Hunting Party

christin·bilal

WHILE AWAITING THE ARRIVAL OF THE LAST OF THEIR GROUP THE MEMBERS OF THE H.A. "LE SAINT JOUR" ARE RESTING AMONGST IN THE FALCON HOUSE SINCE HIS FORCES RETREATED FROM THE PARTY HIERARCHY DECIDED HIS USE TO BE RAISING OF THE FALCONS IN THE DEADLY RESULT.

THAT'S MY KARL KINA A MAGNIFICENT BIRD OF PREY SIT UP SIMPLY MARVELOUS
HE IS TRULY IN TERRES ET N THE SPORT HE LOSES IN TERES IN THE USELESS BODIES VERY QUICKL
HE A HORRIBLE INK AT ALL YOU MY FRIEND S
HE'LL BE ON ANY S WAR EL CRUEL ARE TENAL OUS
T THAT I'M THE DARK WOODS TO THE DARK PLACES AND THE SWAMP AND E LEAVE TO THE SKINNY
WOBONS
HE'S N NOW
HE WILL STALK AND GRAB HIS VICTIM WHEN HE'LL DRIVE T TO THE GROUND AND BE TO HE ES

PUSH IN!
JOSEPH, MAN OF THE PEOPLE
ONE MORE AMERICAN WHERE'S YOUR SENSE OF HUMOR?"

IT'S ALL REALLY VERY INNOCENT IS A PRETTY ONE WELL SO
AND IF THE SPECTACLE MUCH THE BETTER
I'M THE ONLY ONE I'M NOT SURE OUR FRIENDS WOULD FIND ANY HUMOR IN THE NAMES OF YOUR BROS
HEY! SPEAKING OF FRIENDS LOOK OVER THERE!
POLI
SO, COMRADE YOU AREN'T AFRAID OF DRIVING IN THE SNOW IN THAT ANTIQUITY OF YOURS?
PAVEL HAVELKA DIRECTLY FROM PRAGUE I SUPPOSE
PAVEL HAD A TOUGH BUT BRILLIANT CAREER
SINCE THE NORMALIZATION OF 1968 HE HAS BEEN THE CHAMPION OF CZECH PARTY RE UNIFICATION.
AH, GOOD
YES SIR
COME, MY FRIENDS, I'VE HAD A FRUGAL BUT SUBSTANTIAL LUNCH PREPARED WITH THIS COLD, WE'LL NEED IT
HEY WHERE ARE THE VODKA AND THE NINEZ WE CAN'T HAVE OUR LUNCH WITHOUT THEM

KNIHOVNA
OF COURSE ! IS NO THE SAME ONE YOU GAVE ME WHEN I WAS STILL A SOCIAL DEMOCRAT THAT WAS WELL BEFORE THE PARTY TOOK POWER
ENOUGH ALREADY EVERY ONE KNOWS ALL THAT
ČESKOSLO

IT WAS A VERY IMPORTANT PERIOD OF OUR LIVES, SN'T IT? THAT RIGHT VASSILI ALEXANDROVITH? IT WAS A MEMORABLE TIME
DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN YOU ACCOMPANIED ME TO THE MIN. STRY OF CULTURE TO WORK ON THE RECONCILIATION OF THE INTELLECTUAL ELITE AND THE PARTY?
WE WERE JOINED BY THAT CRETIN VIZER WHO SPENT HIS TIME ASKING WHO SET UP WHAT DESPITE HIS IGNORANCE HE MANAGED TO MOVE AHEAD
BUT YOU REMEMBER ALSO, I'M SURE OUR MEETING NEAR THE BORDER ON AUGUST 15 1968
WE WERE IN MY CAR MY ZIL LIMO WHEN YOU WARNED ME OF THE IMPENDING INVASION BY THE TROOPS OF THE PACT. I DIDN'T WANT TO BELIEVE IT
NEITHER DID I AND WE DROVE FOR A LONG TIME WITHOUT SAYING A SINGLE WORD

БОГЕК SVOBODA

ALL THE SAME I HOPE THAT THE OLD TATRA WHICH SAW SO MANY HISTORIC REVERSALS WILL SERVE AS SOME THING OTHER THAN A VEHICLE TO TAKE OUR WEAKENED COMRADES WEST ISN'T THAT SO, JASSIR! ALEX. ANDRONITCHE
AHEM
EE
I SHALL NOT GO NOWE
VERY WELL DEAR FRIENDS THE DOGS ARE HERE
YOU KNOW YOU'RE RIGHT WE SPEND TOO MUCH TIME DAYDREAMING ABOUT THE FACT I'M GOING TO CHANGE
EVERY ONE GET READY THE HUNT STARTS IN A QUARTER OF AN HOUR
HERE TAKE THIS
WHAT? ME USE A GUNE
YOU ARE GOING TO HAVE A LEARN-ONE TIME
31

VASSIL ALEXANDROVITCH WILL BEGIN THE HUNT. JUST MAKE SURE YOU ALWAYS WALK AGAINST THE WIND
AGAINST THE WIND? BUT I DON'T KNOW WHERE THE WIND IS COMING FROM
SILENCE, MY YOUNG COMRADE. VASSIL ALEXANDROVITCH DOESN'T WANT TO HEAR A SINGLE UNNECESSARY WORD WHEN HE HUNTS
YOU MISSED, COMRADE

TO BE CONTINUED

LANN

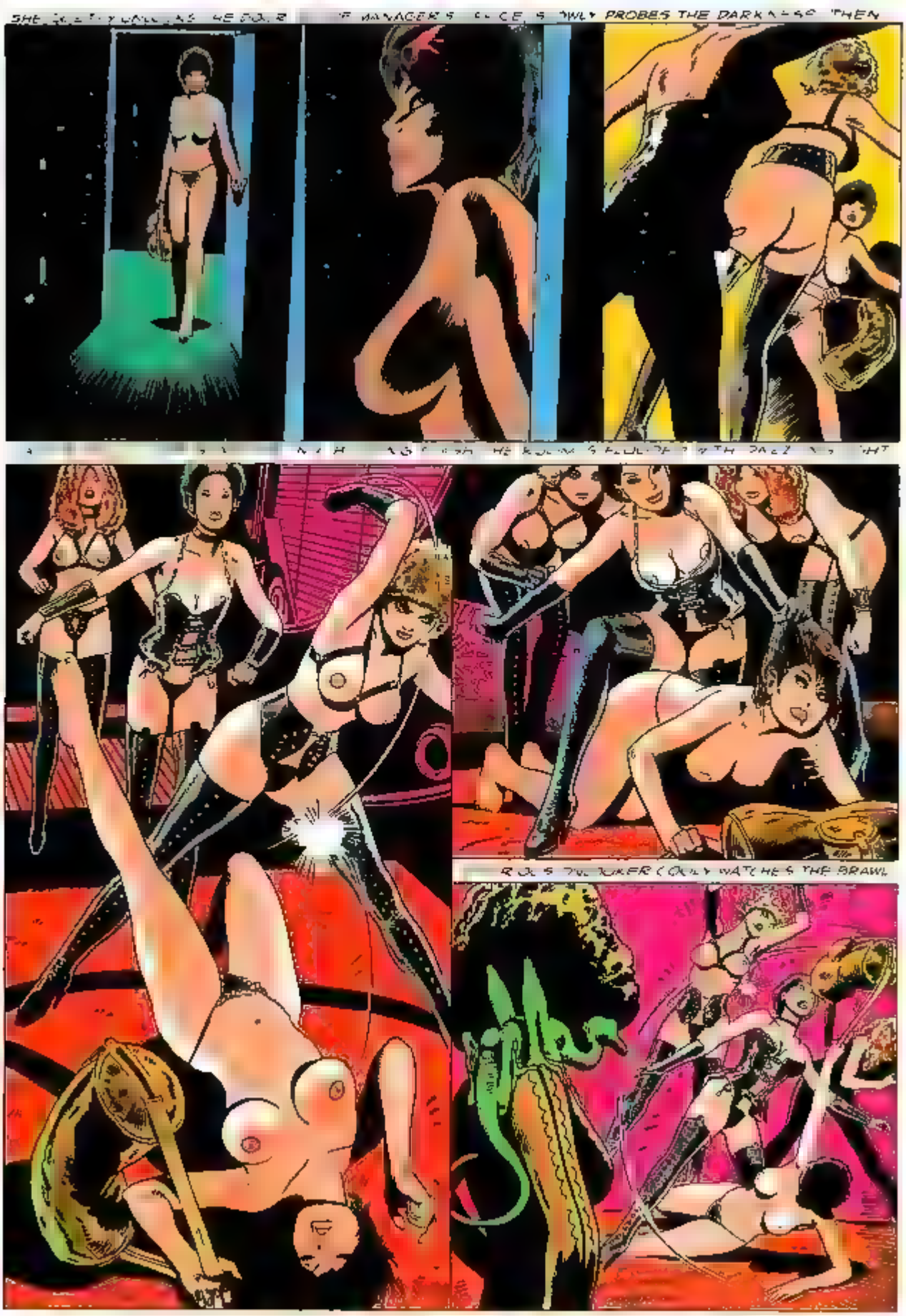
DEEP IN THE CITY BUNKER ON NEON ST.
LANN HAS A NEW PLAN TO GET ATA IN THE MISSING TWINS
SHARD THEY WENT TO IT. HIRED ME FOR TONIGHT'S GOGORAMA AT THE DANCING LADY LOUNGE
ANYWAY, I'M DEAD SURE THERE WON'T BE ANY
BEFORE LANN AND THE LOVELESAR KENTON & COMPANY TOOK OVER AFTER AVENGER HERO LANN HAD WITH ON AN
DANCING LADY
GOGO
HOT
THE KITTY GOGO
THE DANCING LADY'S ASSETS INCLUDE AS A CLUB

BY FRANK THORNE

LANN © [illegible] Frank Thorne

AS LAXX SWINGS INTO HER THIRD SET EVEN THE BLASE
LAXX RETURNS DOWN THE OFFICE CORRIDOR.

THE EVER AMOROUS D... DECIDES TO UNCORK HIS FANTASIES INVOLVING THE STAR PERFORMER.
IN A FLASH... SHE SPINS AND RAMMETS HER KNEE INTO THE STARTLED DJ'S GROIN.
LANN HAULS THE CONKED JOCKEY INTO AN ALCOVE, LIFTS HIS KEYS, AND CONTINUES DOWN THE HALL

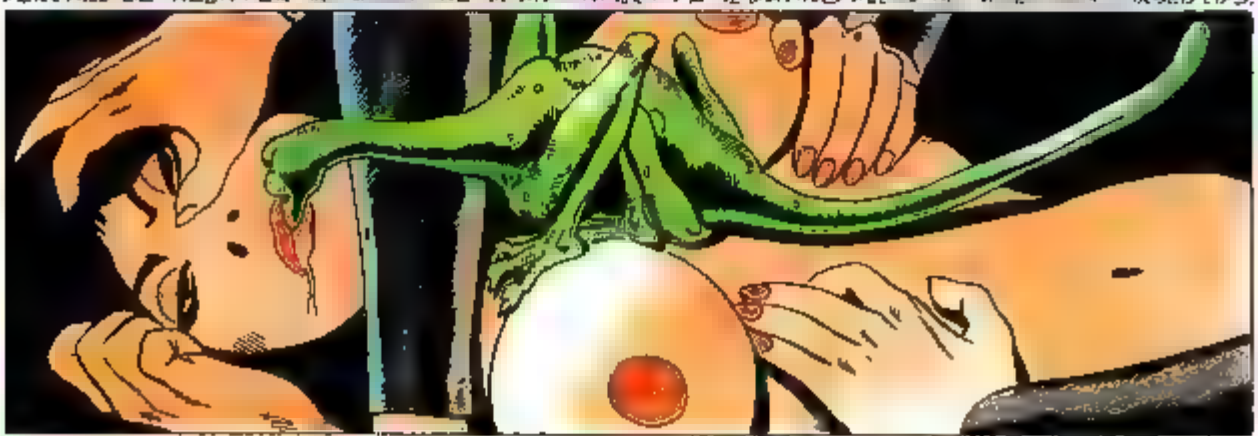

PROBES THE DARKNESS THEN
ROLS THE LOSER COOLLY WATCHES THE BRAWL

SPRINGING TO HER FEET, THE BRUNETTE FLAILS AWAY AT THE ASSAILANTS WITH HER HEAVY COSTUME BAG.

LANN IS GRAPPLED FROM BEHIND AS THE BYSTANDER WHISPERS IN HER EAR TO ANOTHER FAITHFUL PET

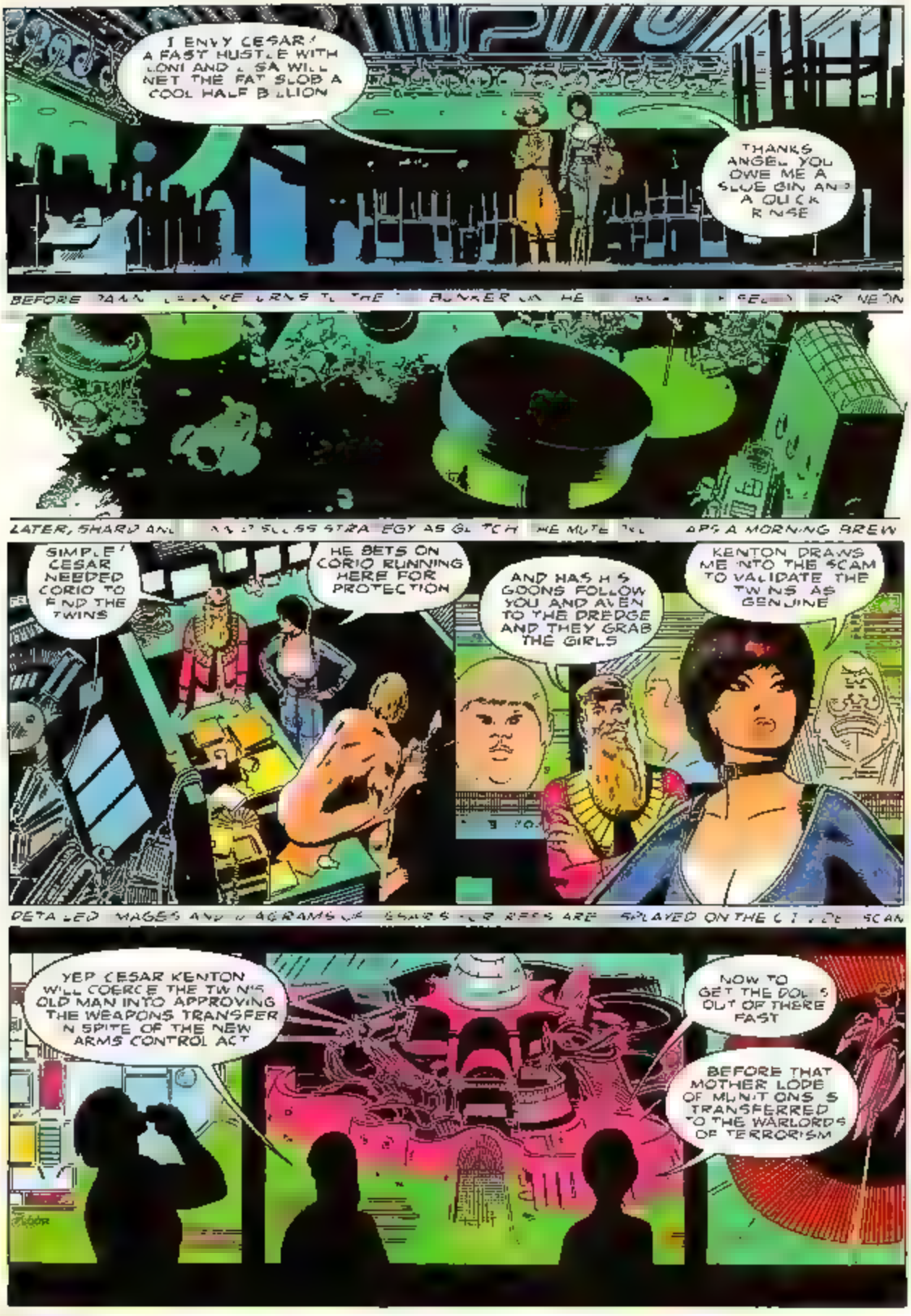
THE OBEDIENT CHEE[illegible] SHAVED [illegible] THE [illegible]ING BELLY OF THE [illegible] AGENT

PERCHED BETWEEN HER [illegible] THE BEAST INJECTS A SEDATING FLUID RAPIDLY [illegible] RED LIPS.



LANN REGAINS CONSCIOUSNESS AND RECOGNIZES MISS ANGEL EMPRESS OF VENIAL VICE IN PORT NEON.

I COULD HAVE SKIPPED THE REPLAY OF YOUR SHOW IN THE S.M. LOUNGE
I'M EASY NO SWEAT WITH C.I. LVER LON AND LISA
OK, FIRST LET ME GUESS CESAR KENTON'S NOT THEIR DADDY
THEY ARE, IN REALITY QUITE LOVING
WELCOME TO MY CLUB AGENT MARIN
FAIR TRADE MY POOP ON THE RUNAWAYS FOR NO HASSLES WITH A LADY TRYING TO MAKE AN INDECENT LIVING
YEAH THEIR DADDY'S THE HEAD HONCHO OF THE CENTAURI PRESIDIUM
THEY SURFACED HERE, DOING A LIVE SEX NUMBER WITH AVEN CORO
I GRABBED THE TWINS FOR A SIMPLE RANSOME SCAM
SO, IT WAS YOUR DROID-BOYS THAT SNATCHED THEM
BUT WHO TOOK THE GIRLS FROM THE DREDGE?
ENTER CESAR
HE'S STASHED THEM AT HIS PENTHOUSE TAJ IN THE HILLS
ECSTASY
LON AND LISA WILL BE CESAR'S BARGAINING CHIPS IN HIS SPECIALITY REALLY BIG CLANDESTINE MILITARY HARDWARE DEALS


ANGEL'S LEATHERETTE GESTAPO PROPELS LANN THROUGH A SET OF CLIMACTIC FAREWELLS THEN.
I ENVY CESAR! A FAST HUSTLE WITH LONI AND LISA WILL NET THE FAT SLOB A COOL HALF BILLION
THANKS ANGEL YOU OWE ME A SLOE GIN AND A QUICK RINSE
BEFORE DAWN LANNE RETURNS TO THE BUNKER HE
LATER, SHARD AND
SIMPLE! CESAR NEEDED CORIO TO FIND THE TWINS
HE BETS ON CORIO RUNNING HERE FOR PROTECTION
AND HASH'S GOONS FOLLOW YOU AND AVEN TO THE DREDGE AND THEY GRAB THE GIRLS
KENTON DRAWS ME INTO THE SCAM TO VALIDATE THE TWINS AS GENUINE
DETAILED IMAGES AND DIAGRAMS OF
YEP CESAR KENTON WILL COERCE THE TWINS OLD MAN INTO APPROVING THE WEAPONS TRANSFER IN SPITE OF THE NEW ARMS CONTROL ACT
NOW TO GET THE DOLLS OUT OF THERE FAST
BEFORE THAT MOTHER LODE OF MUNITIONS IS TRANSFERRED TO THE WARLORDS OF TERRORISM

A TAPE OF SLEEKA ONE OF THE PERFORMERS AT THE BELLES OF VENUS CLUB, FLASHES BEFORE THEM.
EVERY WEEK END KENTON BRINGS IN SOME OF THE GRLS FROM THE VENUS FOR A PRIVATE SHOW
ENTREE TRES BON YOU'VE SET IT UP WITH SLEEKA TO HAVE ME SUB FOR HER TON GHT
GOTTA BLONDE WIG?
YUP
N GOES BLONDE R NGER LOCATES GIRLS
HMMMM FROM THERE LL WING T
BELLES OF VENU
LIVE SEX
ON STAG
C MON MOMMAS SHAKE THEM BEAVERS
FUCK OFF BURN OUT
MOVE ASS SLEEKA
EAT T NSKY
WE RE RUNN N LATE
SUCK MY BLTT R CO
GET YO GODDAMN HAND OFFA MAH T T
THE SHOW AN T STARTED YET CONAN

PRESENTING.. TWO CUTE LITTLE EXTRATERRESTRIAL CREATURES TALKING ABOUT

COLLECTOR'S ITEMS

I DON'T BELIEVE IT!
AH, BUT IT'S TRUE, MY DEAR
WE'VE BEEN SEARCHING THE UNIVERSE FOR GREAT BACK ISSUES OF HEAVY METAL AND
AND
AND NOW WE FIND THAT WE CAN GET THEM DIRECT FROM HM
WOW! RARE EARLY ISSUES OF HM! WHAT COULD POSSIBLY BE BETTER?
FUTURE ISSUES?

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#2/MAY '77 Russian astronauts, 'Conquering Armies,' the ultimate rock festival and more

#3/JUNE '77 Macedo's 'Rockblitz' highly praised 'Sheila,' beginning of Davis's 'World Apart,' Moebius, Corben, Bodé, more.

#4/JULY '77 Lots of Moebius 'Arzach' 'The Long Tomorrow' conclusion of 'Sunpot.'

#5/AUGUST '77 'Polonius' begins. 'The Long Tomorrow' concludes, and 'World Apart' and 'Den' continue.

#6/SEPTEMBER '77 Roger Zelazny has a short story and Moebius, a space opera; plus more 'World Apart,' 'Den,' and 'Polonius.'

#7/OCTOBER '77 Fiction by Theodore Sturgeon, Moebius's "Airtight Garage," "Den" and "Polonius" back again.

#8/NOVEMBER '77 New Harlan Ellison fiction, 9 color pages by Moebius and Rimbaud, conclusions for 'Polonius' and 'World Apart.'

#9/DECEMBER '77 Extra pages for the complete 'Vuzz' by Druillet. 'Fortune's Fool' by Chaykin and Wein plus full color Corben, Macedo, Claveloux and Moebius.

#10/JANUARY '78 Morrow illustrates Zelazny. Lob and Pichard update Ulysses. 'Conquering Armies' concludes. 'Den' continues.

#11/FEBRUARY '78 New adventures of 'Barbarella,' cover and center spread by Nino, plus Moebius and Corben.

#12/MARCH '78 Gray Morrow's swashbuckling Orion debuts, more 'Barbarella,' 'Urm' and 'Den.'

#13/APRIL '78 Our 1st anniversary issue! A 30-page insert from 'Paradise 9.' 'Barbarella' gives birth, while 'Den' wraps it up.

#14/MAY '78 Urm the Mad waves bye-bye, but 'Orion' and 'Barbarella' continue and Alex Nino tips his hat.

#15/JUNE '78 Corben introduces Shahrazad Sturgeon's classic 'More Than Human' is illustrated, more 'Barbarella,' and the origins of 'Heilman.'

#16/JULY '78 A happy ending for 'Barbarella,' a sad ending for 1996, resumption of Druillet's 'Gail,' more 'Heilman,' 'Orion,' 'More Than Human,' and Corben's Arabian Nights.

#19/OCTOBER '78 'Exterminator 17,' Ellison's illustrated Glass Goblin, debut of McKie's 'So Beautiful and So Dangerous.'

#20/NOVEMBER '78 Twenty pages of the Delany/Chaykin 'Empire,' more 'Sindbad,' 'Exterminator,' Mayor Grubert, 'Heilman's' final rebirth, more.

#21/DECEMBER '78 The stocking's full with "Orion," Kirchner's 'Tarot,' and 12 beautiful pages of Moebius.

#22/JANUARY '79 Trina debuts and Druillet concludes 'Gail,' plus McKie and Corben.

#23/FEBRUARY '79 Galactic Geographic,' 'Starcrown,' Corben's 'Sindbad,' McKie's 'So Beautiful and So Dangerous.'

#24/MARCH '79 Twenty pages of Chaykin illustrating Bester's 'The Stars My Destination,' 'Starcrown,' and Ellison's late show.

#28/JULY '79 Bodé's 'Zooks' premieres, Corben's 'Sindbad' concludes, Morrow and Moebius continue, Mike Hinge debuts.

#29/AUGUST '79 Caza steals show with 'New Ark City,' plus Mayerik, Suydam, 'Galactic Geographic,' Bodé, more.

#30/SEPTEMBER '79 Elric, 'Buck Rogers,' a lizard named 'Elvis,' and 'Little Red V-3,' alongside Montellier and Moebius.

#31/OCTOBER '79 A Halloween tribute to H. P. Lovecraft, with Moebius, Breccia, Druillet, Suydam, others.

#32/NOVEMBER '79 Corben's 'Rowlf,' Bodé's 'Zooks,' Brunner's 'Elric,' Chaykin's 'The Stars My Destination,' Moebius and more.

#33/DECEMBER '79 A Christmas package from Caza, Corben, Kofoed, Suydam, Stiles, Trina, Moebius, and Ellison plus 'Gnomes' and Giants.

#35/FEBRUARY '80 An eerie Gourstin cover adorns this issue. Corben's 'The Beast of Wallon' begins, McKie experiments with the Air Pump, and we join Matt Howarth on a crazed acid trip.

#36/MARCH '80 Why did 'The Crevasse' take Jeannette? Read the Schuiten strip! Plus Corben, Mezieres, Moebius, and Lee Marrs's 'Good Vibrations.'

#37/APRIL '80 Our 3rd anniversary issue — 32 pages of 'Champakou' in living color! final installment of Moebius's 'Airtight Garage,' plus Caza, Bilal, Howarth, Corben, Bodé — and more!

#38/MAY '80: Does the Supreme Alchemist exist? Will Aude ever find out? Will 'Champakou' reach the Doll of Jade? Will Joe strike out with the alien Marilyn, too?

#39/JUNE '80 Champakou meets his fate, while Captain Stern" saves the day. And it's the Flying Wallendas vs. Earth!

#41/AUGUST '80: Druillet returns with Salammbo, while Moebius concludes 'Shore Leave' (and is interviewed). Bilal continues 'Progress.'

#42/SEPTEMBER '80 "The Alchemist Supreme" concludes while Bilal's "Progress" picks up steam. Ernie Colon, Paul Kirchner, Leo Duranona contribute nifty shorts, while 'Rock Opera' gets stranger.

#48/APRIL '81 Corben's 'Bloodstar,' Gimenez's 'Good-bye, Soldier,' Harry North's 'Stories from London,' and an interview with Julio Ribera.

#50/MAY '81 Premiers of Chaykin's 'Cody Starbuck' and Bilal's 'The Immortals' Fête!' Plus: Suydam's 'The Toll Bridge' and William S. Burroughs on immortality.

#51/JUNE '81 The 1st part of the Richard Corben interview. Jim Starlin's adaptation of *Outland* premieres. Howarth's 'Changes' winds up. Plus: Caza, Chaykin, Crepax, and Workman!

#55/NOVEMBER '81 Jeronaton's 'Egg of the World.' Jeff Jones, Segrelles, and Bilal all frame the art of Leo and Diane Dillon beautifully.

#58/JANUARY '82. Our 'Happy Future' issue includes Arno, Loustal, Voss, Hé, and Gillon, and 'The Autonomous Man,' all surrounded by Chaykin and Simonson, Segrelles, and Steranko.

#59/FEBRUARY '82 The further adventures of John Difool in 'The Incal Light.' Wein and Chaykin's 'Gideon Faust' gets going — again. Plus Fernandez, Jones, Schuiten.

#60/MARCH '82: 2nd Special Rock issue featuring Dick Matena's 'A Life in the Day,' a surrealistic look at the life of John Lennon. Luis Garcia's 'Nova 2' begins. Plus 'Mercenary,' 'Den,' 'Rock Opera,' etc.

#61/APRIL '82: 5th anniversary issue offers a variety of material. What with Claveloux, Druillet, Moebius, Bilal, and an essay on J.G. Ballard, you'll be busy until our 6th!

#62/MAY '82 The 1st part of David Black's 'Third Sexual Revolution.' 'The Art of De Es Schwertberger.' Plus: 'Sixteen and Vanilla' by Ted

Wilts and Val Lakey

#63/JUNE '82: Fantastic Cities issue, with artists Voss, Caza, Sciabbi, and R. Crumb, all surrounded by regulars Druillet, Moebius, Schuiten, and Fernandez.

#64/JULY '82 Marcos and Lacome's strange "L'Ile et the Circus" and pages from Corben's *Flights into Fantasy*. Plus Jones, Garcia, and Druillet.

#65/AUGUST '82 Jones and Wrightson's "Freak Show" and Pisu and Manara's "The Ape." Plus the finale of "The Incal Light" by Moebius and Jodorowsky.

#66/SEPTEMBER '82 Hecht's "Music-Video Interface." Lupoff's "Barsoomi" and Hinge's "Object." Plus our regulars Bilal, Fernandez, Kierkegaard.

#67/OCTOBER '82 You'll have Scary Dreams after reading our special horror section. Everything from Eddie Poe to the weirdest phobias possible. Don't read it alone! P.S. Last part of Black's "Third Sexual Revolution."

#68/NOVEMBER '82 Part 1 of Kaluta's "Starstruck." Findley's "Tea Arcana" continues as does "Den II" and Druillet's "Yragael." Plus, a peek at Wrightson's *National Lampoon's Class Reunion*.

#69/DECEMBER '82: A Will Stone Gallery, the return of Snydam's Mudwog and Mark Fisher's "Ammo Men." Plus Corben, Fernandez, and Kierkegaard.

#70/JANUARY '83 The strange conclusion to Wrightson's "Freak Show," a look at *The Dark Crystal*, and regulars Manara, Corben, Fernandez, etc.

#71/FEBRUARY '83: The making of the film *The Entity*. Kim Deitch's *Eating Raoul*, and regulars Corben, Kaluta, Crepax, etc.

#72/MARCH '83: We bid a fond farewell to Den and Kath, and a warm welcome to Bilal's "City that Didn't Exist." A Gallery on Robert Williams, plus Manara, Kaluta and more.

#73/APRIL '83: Moebius's "The Twinkle in Fildegar's Eye," and Sauri's "The Odyssey," along with Kaluta, Crepax and Workman.

#75/JUNE '83 Corben's "Doomscult," the end of Crepax's "The Man from Harlem," and a peek at the 3-D science fiction thriller *Spacehunter*.

#76/JULY '83: Liberatore's "Ranxerox," the end of Kaluta's "Starstruck" (for the time being), an interview with Dan O'Bannon and a glimpse at Ray Bradbury's *Dinosaur Tales*.

#77/AUGUST '83 Arno and Jodorowsky's "The Small Earthworm" debuts, Giménez's "A Matter of Time" appears and Captain Beefheart is interviewed, all behind a beautiful Greg Hildebrandt cover.

#78/SEPTEMBER '83 An exclusive interview with Francis Ford Coppola! Plus a Gallery look at the art of Rowena Morrill and the conclusions of "Zora" and "The City that Didn't Exist."

#79/OCTOBER '83 Timothy Leary! Enki Bilal! Pepe Moreno! Walter Hill! Rocky and Bullwinkle?!? A great issue!

#80/NOVEMBER '83: A spirited talk with Will Eisner, along with a Spirit story. Plus Crepax's "Valentina the Pirate." Enjoy.

#81/DECEMBER '83: Ranxerox bows out, Valentina comes on strong, Artist Liberatore is interviewed. Lots more!

#82/JANUARY '84 Part one of David Black's vampire memoirs. Plus "Ranxerox in New York" and a peek at Arthur Clarke's *The Sentinel*.

#83/FEBRUARY '84 Douglas Trumbull talks, John DiFoot returns. And David Black's *My Vampires* comes to an end.

#84/MARCH '84 Douglas Adams is interviewed, Angus McKie and Charles Burns return, Ranxerox ends his New York adventure.

#85/APRIL '84: A long talk with Roger Corman. Plus Joe Kubert in "Doosier" and Boris Vallejo on the cover.

#86/MAY '84: The Railways begins, "Ranxerox" ends, and "The Third Incal" continues. Plus, two June 2050 A.D.'s for the price of one.

#87/JUNE '84: Slava Tsukerman talks about "Liquid Sky," "Lann and The Hunting Party" get started.

#88/JULY '84: Long interviews with funnymen John Cleese and Jerry Lewis. Long awaited art from Jeronaton.

#89/AUGUST '84 Paul Kantner, *Starship* Captain Penelope Spheeris, Godmother of Punk Ed Naha, Good Writer of Bad Movies.

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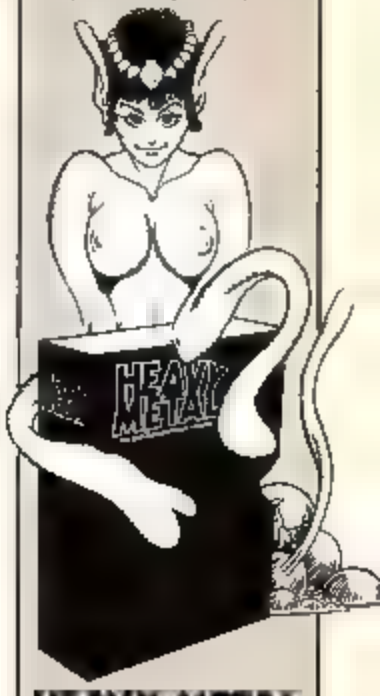

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IT COMES FROM WITHIN:

Probing the Twisted (But Not Very Paranoid) Mind of David Cronenberg

by Lou Stathis

Let's not pussyfoot around, here. David Cronenberg is a *mindfucker*.

Sure, the guy *tries* to masquerade as a mild-mannered, forty-one-year-old Canadian filmmaker, a nice guy even—but you've got to wake up damp early to fool a smart cookie like Lou (before noon, at least). The sordid truth is right there on the screen, for anyone who cares to look for it. And look I did, sitting through every cortex curdling minute of the eight film Cronenberg retrospective and an unhealthy portion of the thirty-five film Cronenberg-curated "Science Fiction Revisited" program, both featured at last year's Toronto Festival of Festivals. It was one *eye-opening* week, let me tell you (yeah, it included the Bunuel/Dali *Un Chien Andalou*).

Though now best known as director of last year's faultly controlled, deliberately understated, and auteurally anonymous adaptation of Stephen King's *The Dead Zone*, Cronenberg's been writing and directing idiosyncratic features since 1969, while still a grad student in English at the University of Toronto. The degree never materialized, but the film career sure did. *Stereo* and *Crimes of the Future* (1970) are a matched pair of transitional anomalies. Part new-wave sf, part French avant-garde non-narratives, and part pretentious student-film jocular gibberish, they are rarely seen and excruciatingly boring (as the perpetrator himself admits). They do, however, contain prescient flashes of Cronenberg's commercially adept, quirkily brilliant, darkly hilarious, and sleazily glamorous scientific horror films that would follow.

First there was *Shivers* (a.k.a. *Orgy of the Blood Parasites*, *The Parasite Murders*, and here in the U.S., *They Came From Within*). Released late in 1975, it cost $179,000 and was shot in just over three weeks in the antiseptic Montreal apartment building Cronenberg called home at the time. It's a shlock classic—like Ballard's *High Rise* as written by an MDA-crazed Philip José Farmer—and questions the advisability of sexual profligacy, offering only ambivalent answers.

Rabid was next (1977), and also probed at sex biologically aberrated by an irresponsible scientist. It features (a surprisingly convincing) Marilyn Chambers as a vamping sexual predator with steel spikes poking from vagina-like slits in her armpits (yuck!). Again ambivalence prevails, crystallized by the image of Marilyn's deadly embrace, an act of loving warmth transformed into punishment for desire.

The next two, *Fast Company* and *The Brood*, were shot one-after-the-other and edited simultaneously; both were released within weeks of each other in the spring of 1979. *Fast Company* was Cronenberg's first filming of someone else's screenplay (*Dead Zone* was the second), and is an ignorable action drama about an aging drag racer (a rev 'em-up?). *The Brood*, however, is a monster—killer performance, chilling suspense, and Cronenberg's most coherent script. The surface story concerns a man's custody battle with his wife, whose radical therapy treatment, "psychoplasmics," gives physical form to her rages—but the film's subtext resonates with womb envy, or the male's eternal jealousy of the intense bond between mother and child.

Scanners (1981) while Cronenberg's most successful effort as writer/director (thanks to the juicy "exploding head" bit, no doubt), is also the least satisfying. It's basically a fairly dumb good-psychic bad-psychic paranoid chase with a hokey twist ending. Ending is also the problem with *Videodrome* (1983), but up till then it's a brilliantly complex, relentlessly creepy bit of business. Like a good Philip K. Dick novel, you never know what to do first—laugh, head for the asylum, or try desperately to wake up. It gives me the willies every time I see it.

That Cronenberg so masterfully intercuts the yucky with the yukky (without resorting to camp, condescension, or self-deprecation) while splashing the viscera with buckets of brains is his true subversion. His movies—unlike those of his contemporaries—don't exist solely to shock, entertain, fill movie theaters, or recall his lost adolescence. They are a thinking man's externalized self-examination, revelatory humanist documents couched in the imagery of mass consumption. He's unique—and if he didn't exist, I don't think anyone would be warped enough to invent him. And worse, I'd readily bet my sanity that his best is yet to come. Whether this promise of unimagined future horrors leaves me eager or scared shitless, I don't know. Both, probably. And I'm sure Cronenberg—the sneaky bastard—wouldn't have it any other way.

—Lou Stathis

Barry Convex appraises the latest *Videodrome* fashions. Very attractive

James Woods shopping around in *Videodrome*.

HM First question, were you a born troublemaker, or is that something you achieved later in life?

DC: Is that what I am, a troublemaker? Oh great. I always wanted to be. Well, I guess I was a very Machiavellian sort of trouble maker in school, though my mother says that I was actually a really easy kid. In fact, she says I slept the first eighteen months of my life, and that I was a totally easy kid to take care of. It was only when I got into the structures of school that I —but even there I was not a real rebel. I was too politically adept, I think, for that.

HM: Too politically adept to get yourself into trouble?

DC: Yeah. In other words, I would be defiant, but it wouldn't be in the manner of a confrontation. I ended up getting the strap only once in my time. I was, however, very frustrating to a lot of my teachers, because they always felt that I had a lot of potential but I wasn't using it. What they didn't realize was that I was totally bored.

HM: So you were an underachiever?

DC: Yeah, they knew I could do better, because every once in a while I'd find something interesting, and I'd do great in it. But basically I found the school system deadening, boring, and vacuous.

HM: What did you do to ease the boredom?

DC: I would read and write, and I had my family. And the street was very lively. It was a real old-fashioned kind of street in the inner city of Toronto, where all the immigrants would come first, after they came off the boats. It was a Jewish area that was in transition. There were Italian kids, Turkish kids and Greek kids on the street —which is not always the case in Toronto.

HM: Seems like a pretty waspy town to me.

DC: Yeah, it is. That's the tradition that I'm doing my best to—that's what I have the most trouble with here.

HM: I understand you had a background in music.

DC: Yeah, my mother was a musician, a pianist—and she would play for various ballet dancers, guys like Nureyev and Erik Bruhn when they came to town, and also for the National Ballet, things like that. She also played for the silent movies when she was thirteen. And though my father was very interested in music, too, he was a writer. So with that atmosphere it was just, you know, normal for me. And I was always amazed to get to other kids' houses and find that there were no books, no music, no nothing.

HM: Did you play an instrument?

DC: Yeah, my mother taught me the piano, and then I took up classical guitar when I was eleven, which was very rare then, because just no one in North America played it. And there was a time when I thought I might end up being a classical guitarist. But I realized that I didn't have the temperament and, possibly not the talent to do it. I just wasn't obsessed with it the way kids that end up doing it are.

HM: Is that the way you do things, by becoming obsessed?

DC: Yeah. And I have some trouble with that, because there are some things that you want to experience that are worth experiencing even though you aren't doing them obsessively and to the very depths of your being. So, learning when *not* to be obsessive is something that I've had to do. Learning when to let go of things, and when to ease off is very important.

HM: Is that the way you make films?

DC: Oh yeah. You have to. I don't *live* film obsessively, though. I'm not— I wouldn't say film is my life. I feel the creative part of it is a very important part of my life —but there are other aspects of life that are equally important. But when I get into it, I do get very obsessive—and it's a good thing, too, because if you don't, in film, you're murdered immediately. You *have* to be obsessive—it's not a part-time life.

HM: What does that do to your family life? I hope your wife is a very understanding woman.

DC: She is. And she's also been in the editing room herself, so she knows what it's like. But you have to fight for it. One of the reasons that I've wanted to make films in and around Toronto is for that—Woody Allen says he makes films in New York so he can sleep in his own bed. He's right—that way you don't have that horrible tension, or loneliness. You know, you're human—you're still alive when you're making a film. It's the same on the set. Even though it's a very crazy intense time when you're shooting, I don't want there to be yelling, screaming, neuroses, antagonism, hostility, because I try not to have them in my normal life. Why should I suffer for the eleven weeks of a shoot if I don't feel that I am more creative under those circumstances?

HM: So you don't subscribe to the theory of creative tension.

DC: No, I think it's bullshit. There's enough tension anyway. I think that directors who try to create that tone on the set are basically neurotic, and those actors and producers who do that as well. And therefore I tend not to work well with those kinds of people, and I avoid them.

HM: Have you ever, or do you use subliminals at all?

DC: No. That's a strange question.

HM: Yeah, I know, but it came to me as I was watching *Videodrome* that I was getting this intense feeling of nonspecific dread.

DC: That's sheer artistry and talent on my part.

HM: I was looking for a cheap excuse.

DC: Exactly. I don't think technology will ever work as well as art in terms of creating a mood and a tone in a person. And I think that it's an accumulation of many details and things in a movie that does that—but no, I've never even *thought* of using subliminals.

HM: Do you think it's manipulative, cheating?

"I don't think technology will ever work as well as art in terms of creating a mood and a tone in a person."

DC Feels like that to me, yeah. And I don't trust it. It's never been proved effective—and while I'm interested in being a pioneer in my art, I don't want to be a pioneer in technology. I'll leave that to others who have the talent and patience for it. Technically, I am very conservative—even though *Videodrome* is not ultimately a conservative film.

HM I go both ways about subliminals. I think it's cheating in a sense, but it's also another legitimate way to push your audience to the edge—and I see your films as pushing lots of things to the extreme.

DC: But do they work?

HM I don't know.

DC That's the thing—I don't know either. And maybe if it was a reasonably well-established technique that resulted in an audience reaction that I thought was worthwhile, I might try it. But I doubt it—it seems antithetical to me, somehow. I've never been asked this before, so you're getting the raw thinking ... but it seems antithetical to the artistic process—because I think that in art you want the mind and the viscera to work together almost consciously. I want people to be able to be conscious of what's going on and still be drawn into the mood that I'm taking them into. In other words, it's too mechanical to me, it's too button-pushing. And for the same reason, a film like *Hallowe'en*—which is technically very interesting—is still a little too knee-jerk for me. It's a reflexive film. I mean, most of what it's got is knee-jerk stuff—things jumping out of corners, stuff like that. And I'm not saying that I haven't done that myself, but it's usually at very specific moments in the film, very carefully set up with a lot of emotional and other kinds of resonance. And that's as close to that kind of manipulation as I think I've ever come in my films, for either a real or a false scare. I can remember every time I've done it.

HM That seems consistent with a pervasive fear of mind control that I get from your movies—like in *The Brood*, in *Rabid*, in *Videodrome*, and especially in *Shivers*, with these people under zombie-like control dispersing out into the world. Is that something you're scared of?

DC: Well, I used to say that I wasn't really worried about that, and in a certain sense it's true that I'm not. I'm not a particularly paranoid person, I don't think.

HM Because *Videodrome* is one of the most paranoid movies I've ever seen.

DC: Absolutely. But what I'm doing there is abstracting one out of many strains of colors and tones from myself, and focusing on that to the exclusion of everything else—which one critic here, fool that he is, called narrow-mindedness. For me, it's the essence of what you do when you're an artist. You're abstracting something that's real, and then you're focusing on it in a way that illuminates it—whereas if you left it where it was you wouldn't necessarily notice it.

HM But that doesn't reflect your own paranoia?

DC: That's right. Everyone has a certain amount of paranoia built into them, and that's reasonable—it's part of our survival mechanism, and in many cases it's justified. But I don't think mine is all that well exercised in my personal life—maybe that's why I try it out on film. Because I do know people who are extraordinarily paranoid in their lives, and that doesn't always come across in their art. There are some well-known comedians who are much more paranoid than I am.

HM Comedians are some of the sickest people on Earth.

DC: I agree. That's the thing—and yet their art is the opposite of their lives. But now, just discussing school with you, and feeling my own reactions to things that have happened with the Ontario Censor Board here, and the incredible depths to which I resent and hate those things—I begin to realize that I do resent a certain imposition of authority on me. This sudden intrusion into your life of a force like this Board of Censors, which does not want to talk to you, and takes something that you've worked on for two years and then hacks it up and gives it back to you, and it's the *law*—you can go to jail if you try to change it. *That's* scary. Then, suddenly, there is something in my nervous system that goes completely bananas.

What *really* bothers me—and I'm certainly not the first person in history to feel this—is the lack of understanding these people on the Board of Censors have for what art is and what it's for, why there should be art, and the difference between art and sleaze. Or even sleazy art and sleaze. Which is a little harder.

HM Your films—certainly *Shivers* and *Rabid*—test the boundary between art and sleaze.

DC: Yeah, but people are worried about *Videodrome* because in it a woman burns her breast and seem to like it—and the big new trend in censorship seems to be the portrayal of women in film. If they are portrayed as enjoying pain, this is bad. The problem of course is if you listen to every special interest group—whether it's as broad as women or as small as a particular ethnic minority—you will not be able to write or do anything. Ultimately there is someone who will resent everything you do.

Like I was reading in the paper just the other day—a lady Alderman here in Toronto was testifying in a court case, trying to determine the community standards—because censorship is supposed to reflect what is permissible by community standards. Well, you already have a problem here, because an artist is always, in one way or another, pushing against these standards and therefore by definition an artist might very well be beyond or outside of these standards. Second, this lady was saying which sex acts are permissible—very specific, like no coming on somebody's body. So this means you have a little booklet: "Sex Acts, Permissible and Not Permissible." And then she mentioned *Videodrome*, and said as far as she was concerned it violated community standards because I showed a woman burning her breasts. Now the context of that act wasn't mentioned—the fact that there were other women in the film who didn't burn their breasts, the fact that there might be some question as to whether the woman really enjoyed it, and the fact that there was a man

"Censorship is supposed to reflect what is permissible by community standards. Well, you already have a problem here, because an artist is always, in one way or another, pushing against these standards."

David Cronenberg

"Maybe I should try soft lenses."

Cronenberg with Geza Kovacs coaching the cast of *The Dead Zone*.

"I want hope but I want it to be real and tough."

in the room who was horrified by what she did. None of these things mattered. It's just the image. And that's the only way these people can work, of course, because otherwise they'd have to become interpreters of the work, and they are obviously unsuited to do that. When you have bureaucrats interpreting art you're in serious trouble.

HM: Do you think there's more danger in these overt mechanisms of social control—censorship boards, legislating morality, shit like that—as opposed to the more subtle mechanisms that seep into the culture?

DC: Well, the difference between those two cases is that one is a very conscious, concerted effort on the part of people to control what others see and do and think. And the kind of seeping that you're talking about is very much what McLuhan described as the way our environment—which is created by us—comes back to control us and reshape us without control. I mean—I sense things in the atmosphere that are not good. But here is where, in the strictest sense, I'm not a paranoid, because I don't believe that some really intelligent people are doing this for a very specific, nasty purpose. I almost wish there *were* such people—it would be nice to know that *somebody* knew what was going on. But I don't think anybody does. I think we are all—whether the Soviets or whoever—fumbling and floundering. Whether you are very consciously trying to control the media so your image to the world is one thing when the reality is something else, or whether it's just things becoming distorted almost accidentally.

HM: The paranoia in your films seems more like a fear of *lack* of control than a fear of someone else in control.

DC: Well, that's interesting, because on a panel I did with John Landis and John Carpenter—the "Horror Masters" they called us—we were all asked what scared us. John Carpenter said, "Loss of control." I didn't say that. I was talking more about death and things—but obviously there is a sense in which he shares in my fears and I guess I also share in his, because, yes, there is a place where loss or lack of control is the enemy on its own. Even if there is nothing else. Part of the reason, of course, is that it is innate in the artist to bring some kind of order out of chaos. You do it every time you start to create something new—in particular if you're writing your own stuff, and you are absolutely starting from scratch—the blank sheet of paper. That is the primal act of creation, and lack of control, entropy, or inertia is the enemy.

HM: What about the fear of science-gone crazy that turns up in so many of your films?

DC: What I'm really saying there is that things are so complex and so unpredictable, and that in fact there is a certain creative energy in the universe that goes on by itself, and when we plug into it there is a certain element that takes over to change the shape of what we started with. And it goes out of our control, and it does have consequences that go beyond us. So that, for example, some scientists have recently come up with an organism of some kind that protects crops from a sudden frost—something from recombinant DNA research—and they're saying, "Well, there's no danger, we're only going to use a little bit of it." And I can't believe these guys—they're acting like scientists in one of my movies. They honestly don't think anything bad can happen from unleashing this brand-new microorganism on the world.

"I really believe that an artist has no social responsibility when he's being an artist. None whatsoever."

HM: You'd think a scientist would be more aware of the delicate balance of ecology. Why do you think this lack of responsibility exists? Is it just a matter of not taking your thinking far enough?

DC: I think there's a bit of fatalism involved because I believe that we'll never be able to take anything far enough—because it just keeps going on and on. We are finite and the things that we set in motion are sometimes infinite in their implications. And therefore, in a way, I'm looking at my scientist and saying, well, these guys are trying their best. The fact that they fuck up horribly, well, that's the way it is. And in that sense I'm very fatalistic, and in a weird way, optimistic.

HM: Your movies do seem to end on a note of bleak romanticism.

DC: Yeah, that's a good description. What I'm saying is, I want hope but I want it to be real and tough. I want it to be not idealized but absolutely for real, so that I can say, "This hope is so nasty that it's *got* to be real." And for me that's the only kind of hope that's going to work. Pie in the sky is obviously not going to work.

HM: What about your own responsibility as a purveyor of powerful, shocking imagery?

DC: Well, I really believe that an artist has no social responsibility when he's being an artist.

HM: None whatsoever?

DC: None whatsoever. But I hedge my bets by also believing that art doesn't cause people to go out and do crazy things and kill people. And if I were really totally secure in saying the artist has no social responsibility, I wouldn't care whether art made people go out and kill people or not. But I *do* care, you know. So, as a citizen I have social responsibility, but as an artist I don't. And I really believe that you should be able to say anything in your art—admit anything, confess to anything, fantasize anything, suggest *anything*. Because that's in the very nature of art.

HM: No matter what the consequences are? The artist has *no* responsibility for what happens?

DC: I think it has to be that way—mind you, that's only to *say* anything, not to *do* anything. There's a difference. I think art should be dangerous. If it's not, it's useless—it shouldn't exist, because then it becomes just entertainment. Entertainment is not dangerous. Art *is* dangerous, and *should* be dangerous. ●

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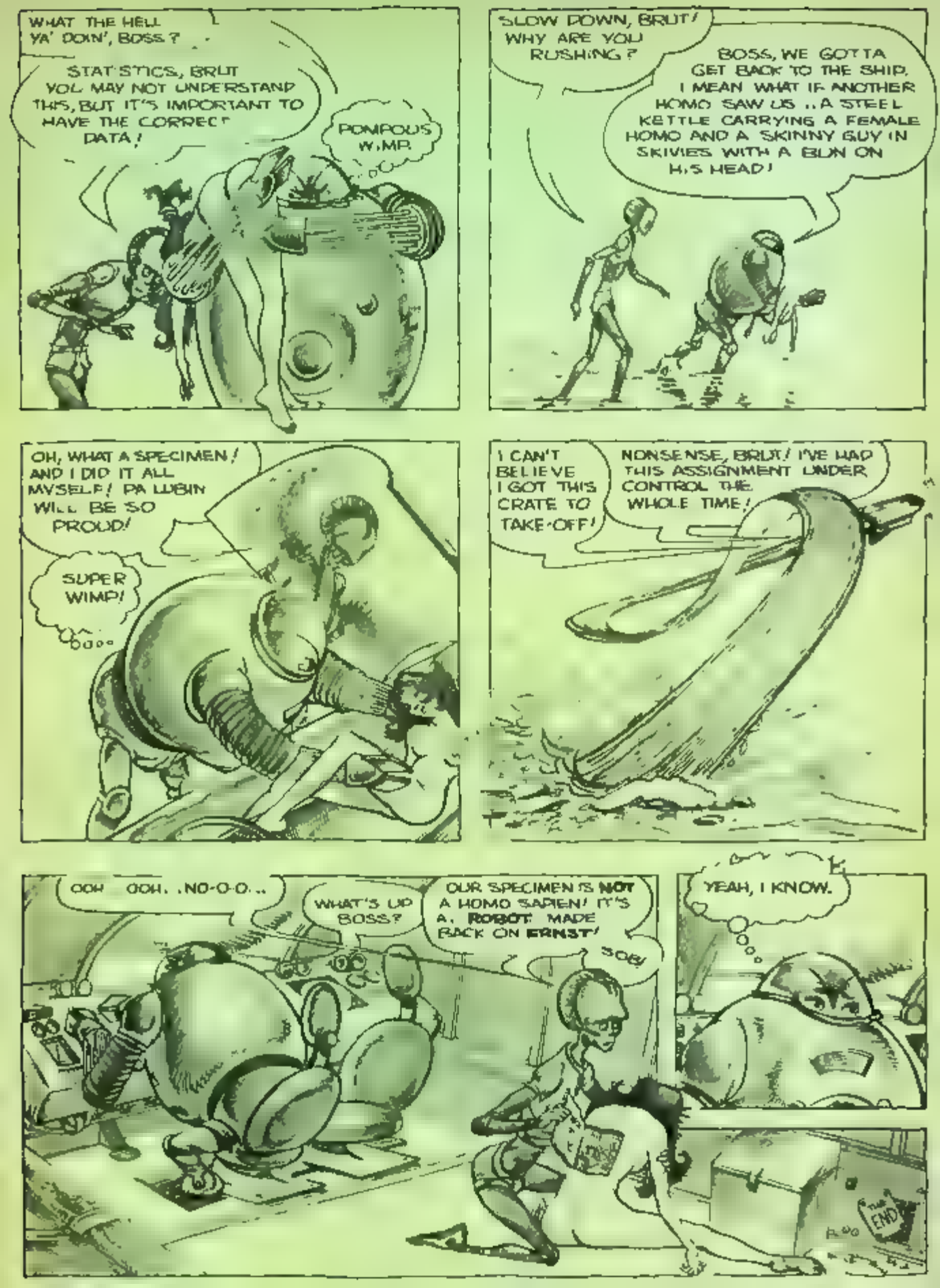
IT'S NOT MY FAULT!
PETERSEN/McPHEETERS
HELL! DREGS FOR EQUIPMENT AND THE DREGS OF AN ASSIGNMENT. COULDN'T PA LUBIN DO BETTER FOR YOU?
HOMO SAPIEN SAMPLING IS AN IMPORTANT ASSIGNMENT. AND REMEMBER, BRUT, YOU ARE PART OF THE EQUIPMENT!
WELL, LUCKY FOR YOU THEY SENT ME!
AAGH! CATCH THE HOMO SAPIEN SCANNER!
YOU CRUSHED IT! GUESS I CAN'T EXPECT MUCH FROM AN [A]° SERIES ROBOT!
WELL, LET'S SEE YOU USE YOUR SUPERIOR INTELLIGENCE, BOSS!
QUIET, OR I'LL REMOVE YOUR VOICE CHIPS. FOLLOW ME TO THOSE TREES. MY BRAIN SCAN INDICATES AN OBJECT THAT STANDS UPRIGHT.

BRUT, YOU FOOL, THAT'S NOT A HOMO SAPIEN!
OH, I SUPPOSE WHAT YOU'RE HOLDIN' IS.. HE JUST STEPPED OUT FOR A MINUTE, RIGHT ?
LISTEN, BOSS, THIS CREATURE WAS GOING TO EAT YOUR LEG... THAT'S WHY HE'S MINCED MEAT!
OH? AH, THANKS, BRUT
HOURS LATER
I DON'T KNOW, BRUT I THINK IT'S TIME TO ABORT THIS MISSION. MAYBE PA LUBIN IS RIGHT MAYBE I AM A WIMP.
MAYBE ?
DON'T GIVE UP LUBIN
LOOK! THERE'S SOMETHING!
SURE, ANOTHER ALLIGATOR FOR YOU TO SQUASH!
NO, COME ON, LET'S CHECK IT OUT!
BRUT, IF THIS IS SOME KIND OF JOKE, I'M GOING TO REMOVE YOUR VISION CHIPS.
IT FEELS KIND OF SQUEESHY AND SOFT. I BELIEVE THIS IS A FEMALE HOMO SAPIEN.
YEAH!


WHAT THE HELL YA' DOIN', BOSS?
STATISTICS, BRUT YOU MAY NOT UNDERSTAND THIS, BUT IT'S IMPORTANT TO HAVE THE CORRECT DATA!
POMPOUS WIMP
SLOW DOWN, BRUT! WHY ARE YOU RUSHING?
BOSS, WE GOTTA GET BACK TO THE SHIP. I MEAN WHAT IF ANOTHER HOMO SAW US .. A STEEL KETTLE CARRYING A FEMALE HOMO AND A SKINNY GUY IN SKIVIES WITH A BUN ON HIS HEAD!
OH, WHAT A SPECIMEN! AND I DID IT ALL MYSELF! PA LUBIN WILL BE SO PROUD!
SUPER WIMP!
I CAN'T BELIEVE I GOT THIS CRATE TO TAKE-OFF!
NONSENSE, BRUT! I'VE HAD THIS ASSIGNMENT UNDER CONTROL THE WHOLE TIME!
OOH OOH. .NO-O-O..
WHAT'S UP BOSS?
OUR SPECIMEN IS NOT A HOMO SAPIEN! IT'S A ROBOT MADE BACK ON ERNST!
SOB!
YEAH, I KNOW.
THE END

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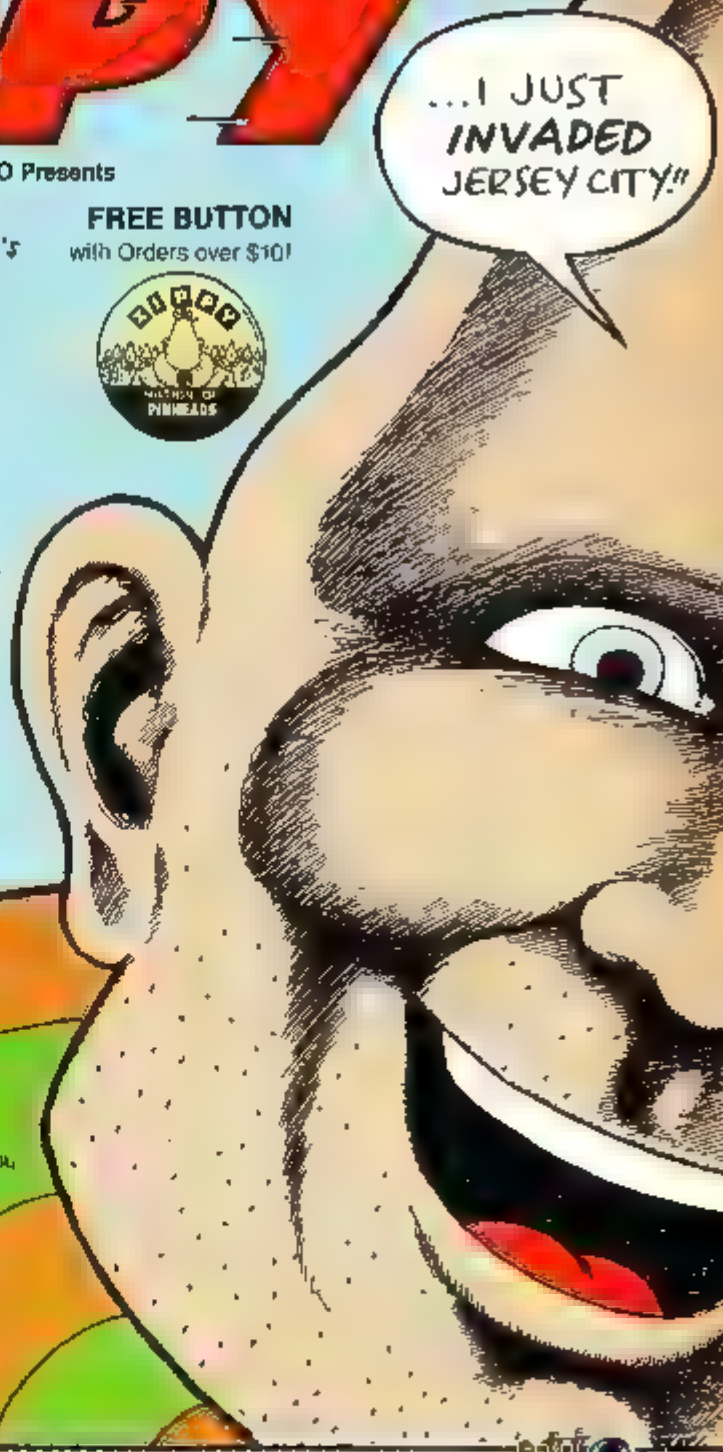

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WUZ HOPIN' YA'D SAY DAT!
NO!
IT WUZ YOUR CHOICE, LADY. HEH HEH!
TSK, TSK! MESSY, MESSY!
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2

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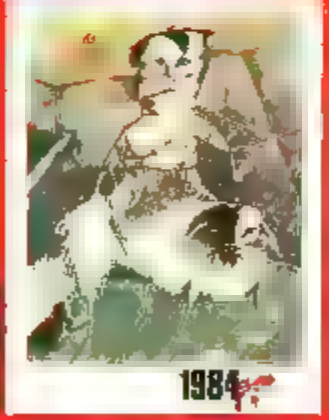

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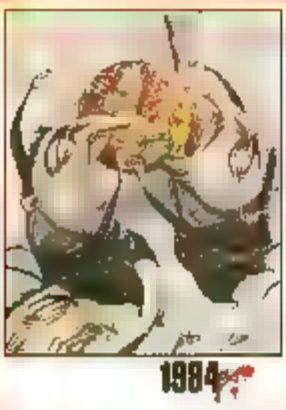

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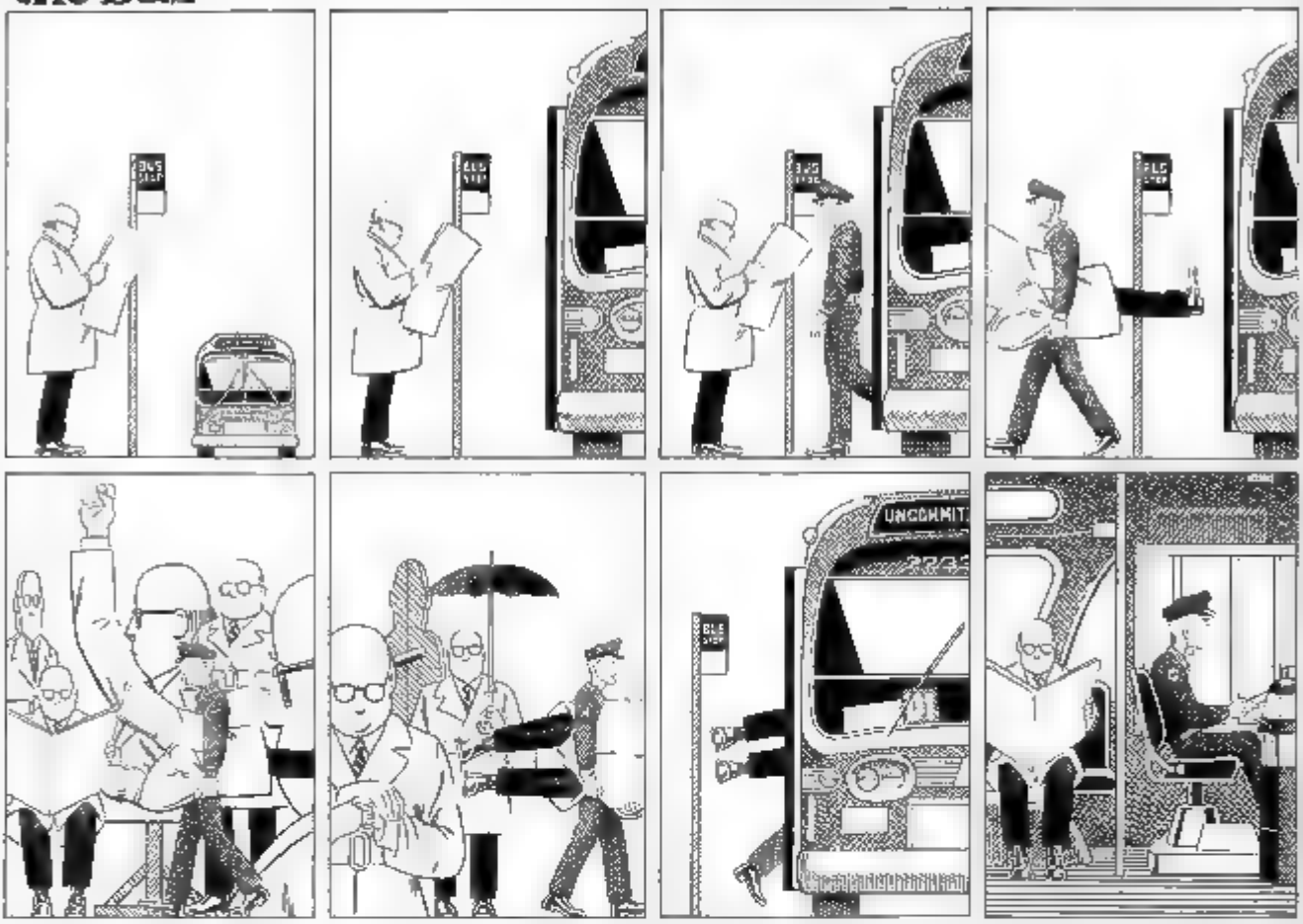

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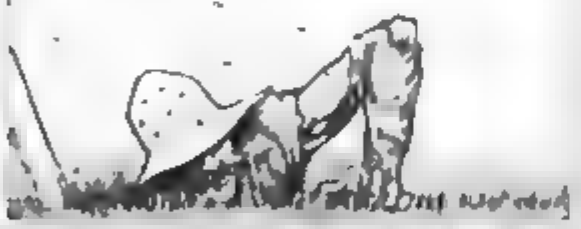
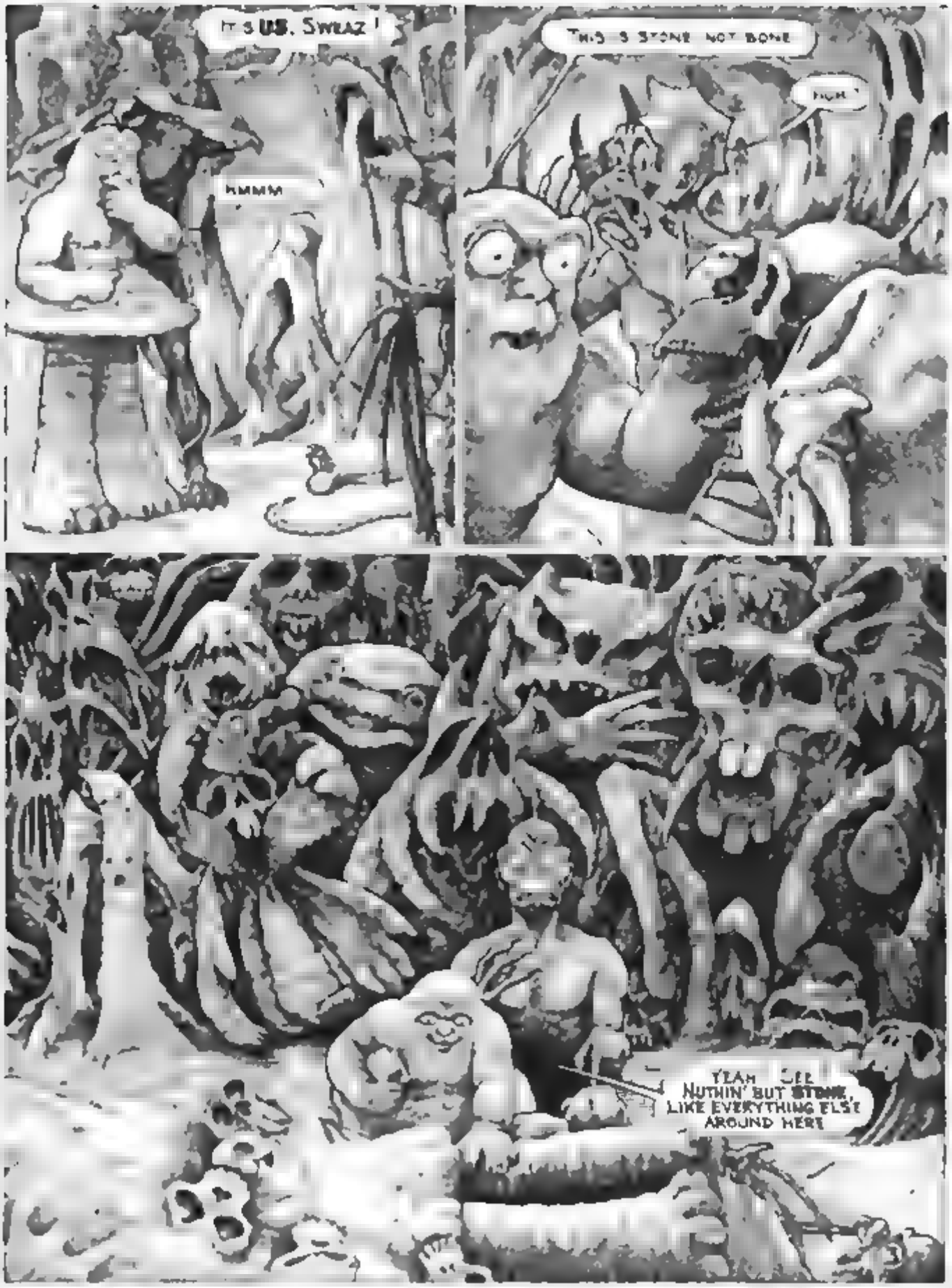
WELL, DON'T HOLD YOUR COLLECTIVE BREATHS... IT'S **NOT** GOING TO HAPPEN THIS MONTH EITHER. TIME PASSES SLOWLY AND WE ARE NEARING THE CLOSE OF ONLY THE **SECOND DAY** OF OUR LITTLE NARRATIVE

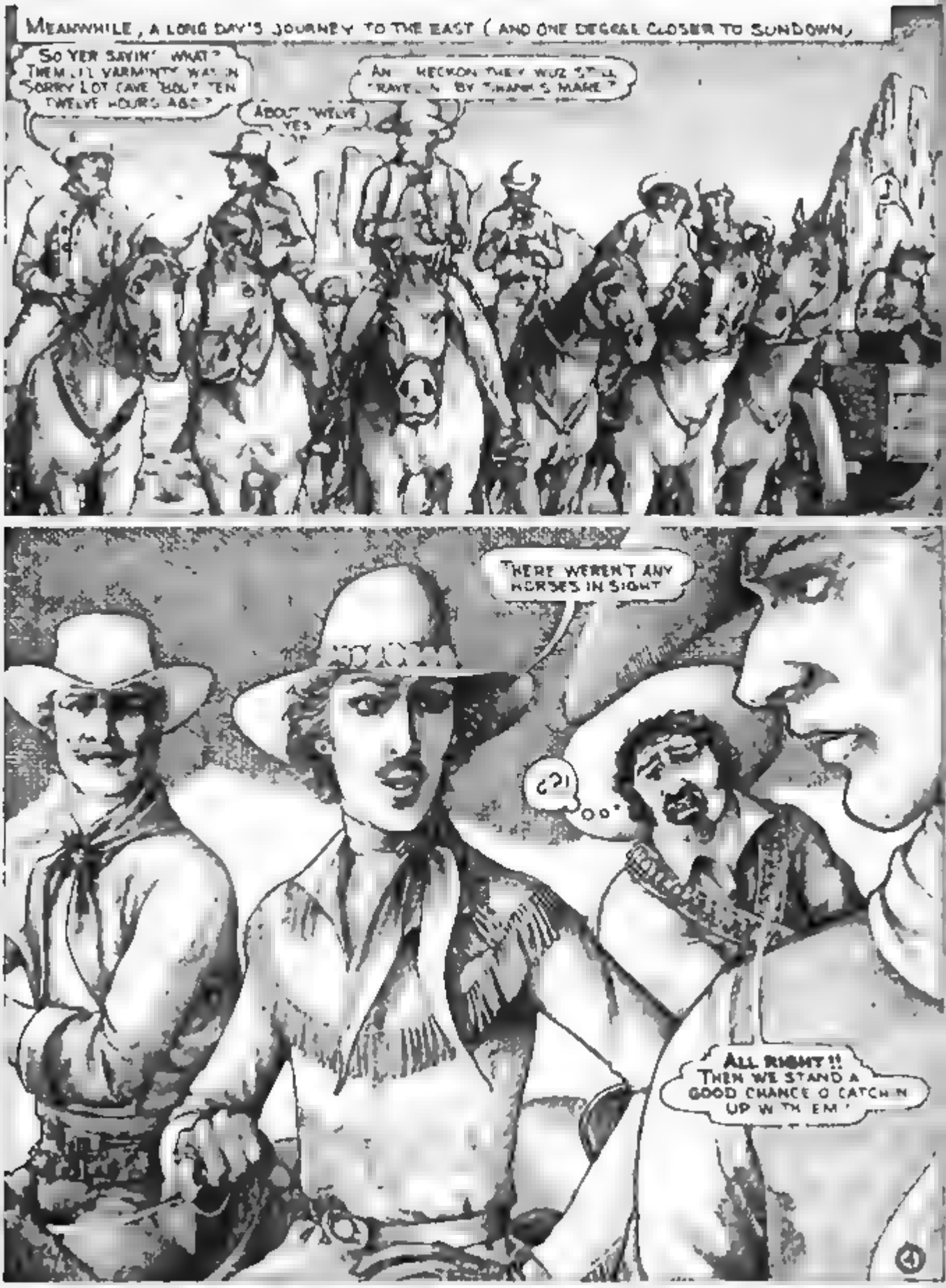
HARD TO BELIEVE, ISN'T IT? AND YET, EVEN AS I SPEAK, THE SUN IS NEARING THE HORIZON AND **NIGHT IS SLIPPING UP** WITH ALL THE STEALTH AND ALL THE CHARM.

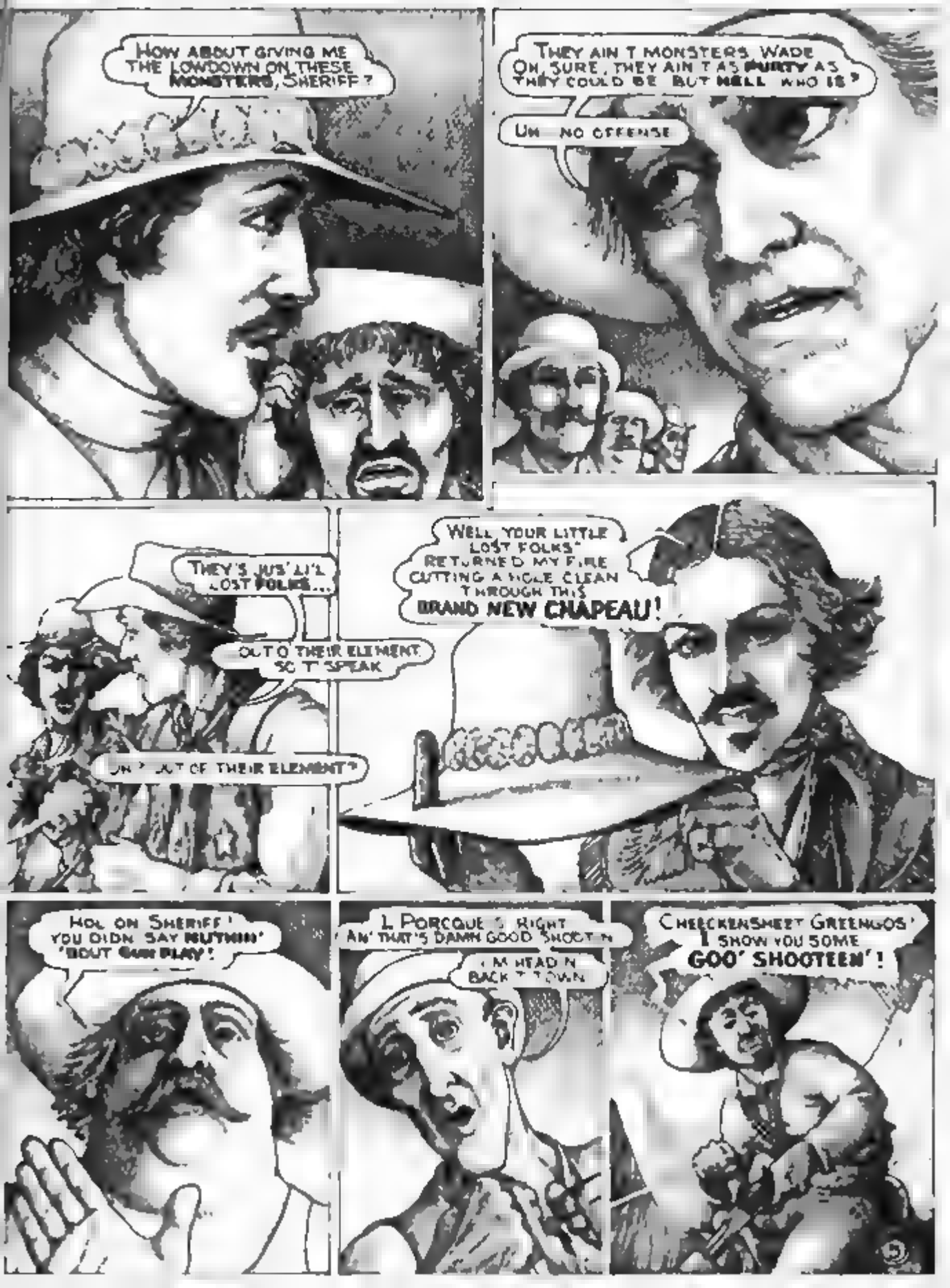


OF A **SIDEWINDER!**

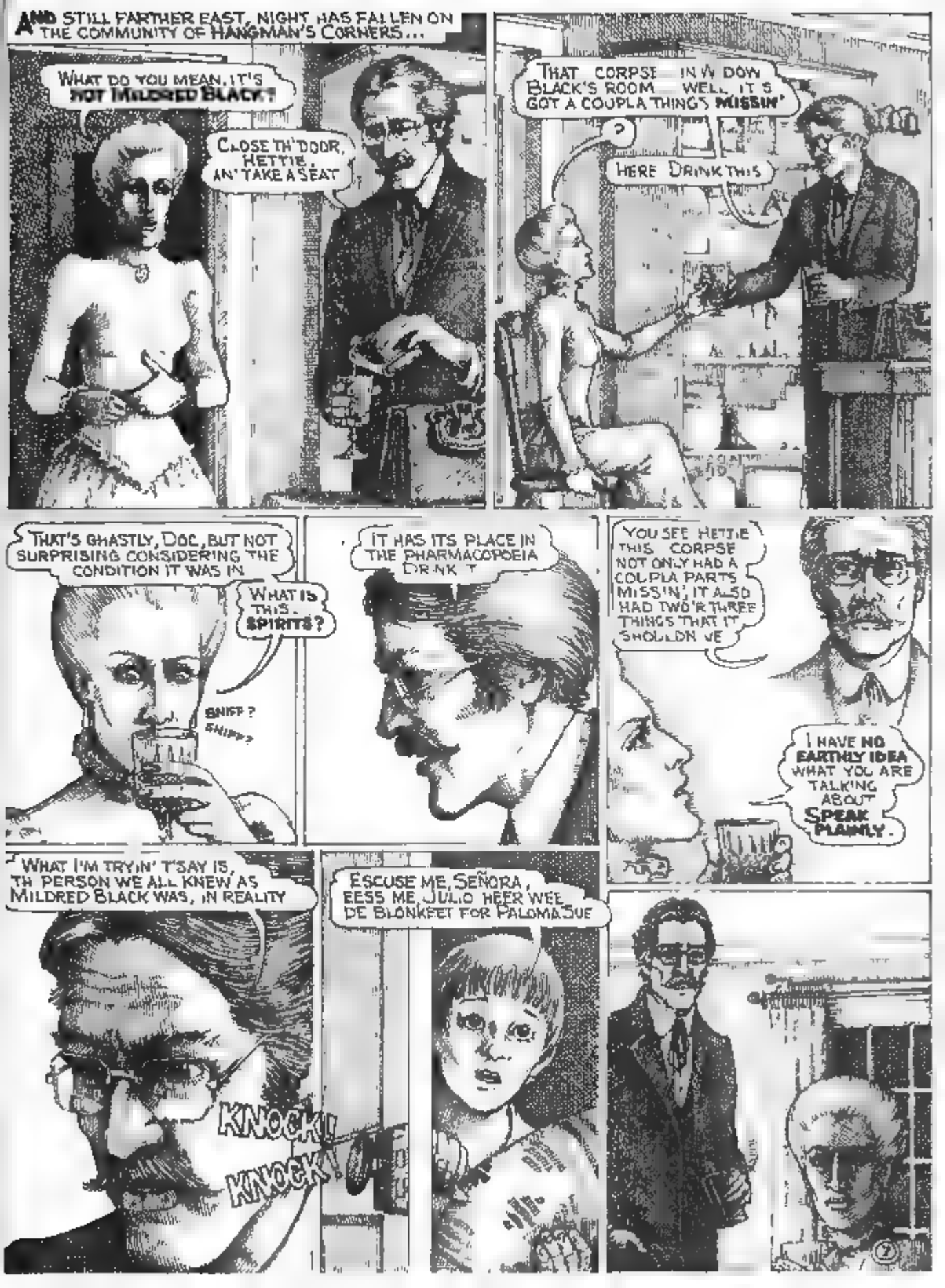
... SURE THIS
... ROCKET WORK?


IT'S US. SWEAZ!
HMMM
THIS IS STONE NOT BONE
HUH?
YEAH SEE NUTHIN' BUT STONE LIKE EVERYTHING ELSE AROUND HERE


MEANWHILE, A LONG DAY'S JOURNEY TO THE EAST (AND ONE DEGREE CLOSER TO SUNDOWN)
SO YER SAYIN' WHAT? THEM IT'L VARMINTS WAS IN SORRY LOT CAME 'BOUT TEN TWELVE HOURS AGO?
ABOUT TWELVE YES
AN' I RECKON THEY WUZ STILL TRAVELLIN BY THAIR'S NAME.
THERE WEREN'T ANY HORSES IN SIGHT
ALL RIGHT!! THEN WE STAND A GOOD CHANCE O CATCHIN UP WITH EM'
4


HOW ABOUT GIVING ME THE LOWDOWN ON THESE MONSTERS, SHERIFF?
THEY AIN T MONSTERS, WADE OH, SURE, THEY AIN T AS PURTY AS THEY COULD BE BUT HELL WHO IS?
UH NO OFFENSE
THEY'S JUS' LI'L LOST FOLKS...
OUT O THEIR ELEMENT SO T' SPEAK
UH? OUT OF THEIR ELEMENT?
WELL YOUR LITTLE LOST FOLKS" RETURNED MY FIRE CUTTING A HOLE CLEAN THROUGH THIS BRAND NEW CHAPEAU!
HOL ON SHERIFF! YOU DIDN SAY NUTHIN' 'BOUT GUN PLAY!
L PORCQUE S RIGHT AN' THAT'S DAMN GOOD SHOOTIN
I'M HEAD N BACK T TOWN
CHEECKENSHEET GREENGOS' I SHOW YOU SOME GOO' SHOOTEEN'!

SIMMER DOWN, JOAQUIN!
KA-PAM!
EY WEEL COME RUNNEEN' BACK


AND STILL FARTHER EAST, NIGHT HAS FALLEN ON THE COMMUNITY OF HANGMAN'S CORNERS...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, IT'S NOT MILDRED BLACK?
CLOSE TH' DOOR, HETTIE, AN' TAKE A SEAT
THAT CORPSE IN W DOWN BLACK'S ROOM WELL, IT S GOT A COUPLA THINGS MISSIN'
HERE DRINK THIS
THAT'S GHASTLY, DOC, BUT NOT SURPRISING CONSIDERING THE CONDITION IT WAS IN
WHAT IS THIS. SPIRITS?
SNIFF? SNIFF?
IT HAS ITS PLACE IN THE PHARMACOPOEIA DRINK T
YOU SEE HETTIE THIS CORPSE NOT ONLY HAD A COUPLA PARTS MISSIN', IT ALSO HAD TWO'R THREE THINGS THAT IT SHOULDN VE
I HAVE NO EARTHLY IDEA WHAT YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT SPEAK PLAINLY.
WHAT I'M TRYIN' T'SAY IS, TH PERSON WE ALL KNEW AS MILDRED BLACK WAS, IN REALITY
KNOCK! KNOCK!
ESCUSE ME, SEÑORA, EESS ME, JULIO HEER WEE DE BLONKEET FOR PALOMA SUE
2

BACK, AGAIN, WESTWARD, THE LAST RAYS OF THE DYING DAY FAIL TO PENETRATE THE STYGIAN DEPTHS
Tex
Him?
Cnapum ßes mönan bliþ on þæm Wēsten!
Cōme..
engelen mönan!
Vol XV
Forgotten Lore
OH, YEAH? HMM. RECKON I'M GONNA HAFTA PUT ME UP A FENCE AROUND THAT THERE PLACE
I JUST LOVE IT WHEN SHE STARTS THAT STUFF. DON'T YOU?
WELL, HERP AND SWEAZ MIGHT GET LUCKY AND SURVIVE THEIR VISIT TO THE ROCK GARDEN. THE SHERIFF AND HIS INCREASINGLY UNLOCAL SEARCH PARTY MIGHT HOLD TOGETHER LONG ENOUGH TO MAKE CAMP FOR THE NIGHT, AND THE WIDOW BURNS MIGHT FIND OUT WHAT DOC MASON DOES OR DOESN'T KNOW ABOUT MILDRED BLACK. COULD BE WE'LL SEE MORE OF PALOMA SUE. ALL THIS COULD TAKE PLACE IN OUR NEXT EPISODE.
BUT WILL TEX MEET THE TOAST OF EUROPE?
I DUNNO

h wvember 41st,199200164--a date that few can ever forget Nik Klaatu remembers
Well,my daughter,Nan
Nanoo kept nagging me
until I took her and her
friends to see this new
singing group on the
ed Skullivan Show"
the Peterpause V"they were called back then I'd never seen anything like it--
those teenage girls screaming and tearing their clothes and wetting their pants
SCREAM'SCREAM
And what did you
think about it?
Well,at the time I was
disgusted -but later I
changed my mind.

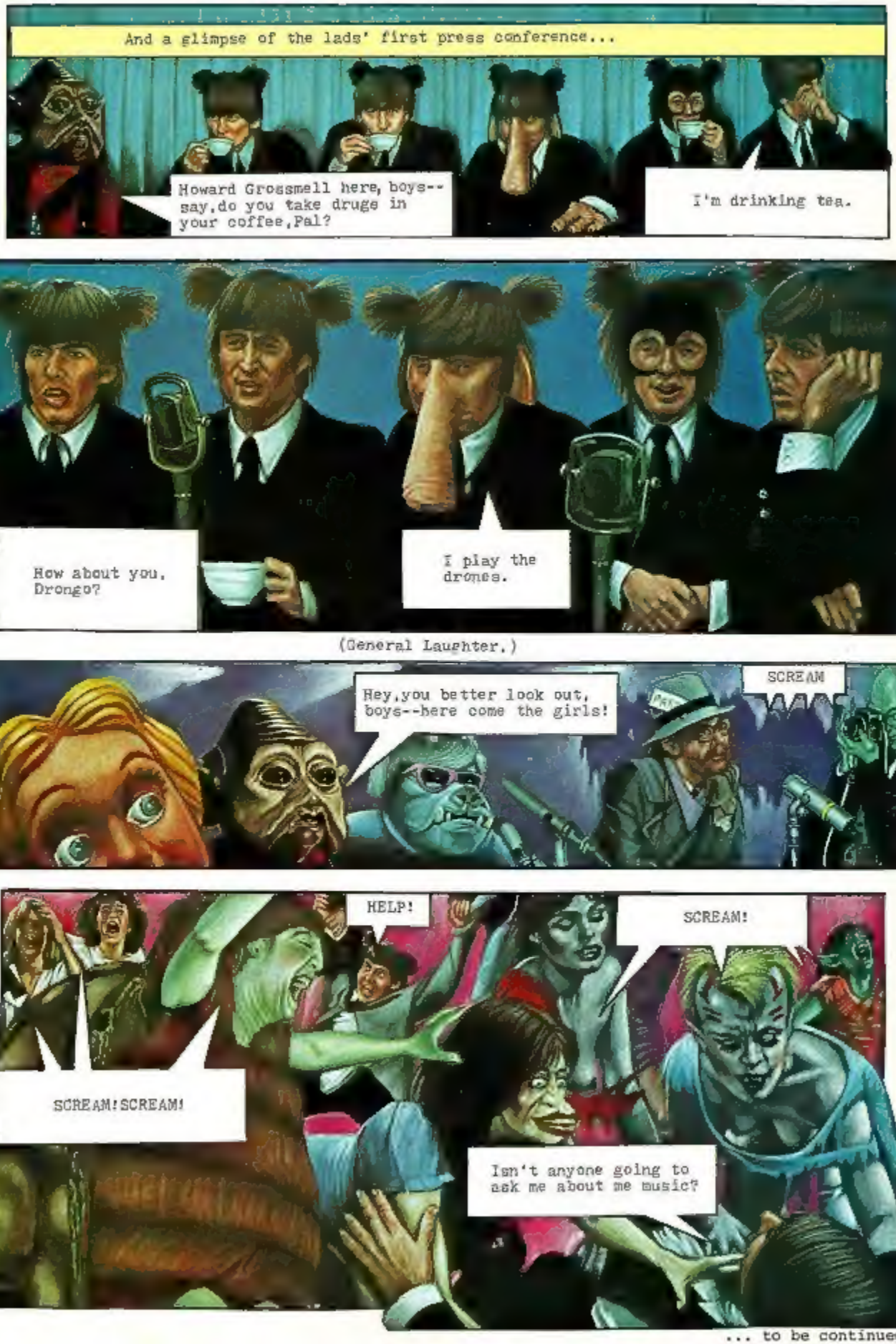
And so the "Betelgeuse V"--renamed the Betels by Ded Skullivan's famous stammer--went on to become a show-biz legend. We took our cameras to the planet Connair III to speak to a group of housewives who were among the first fans of the so-called "Fad Five"...

Oh, they were just so wholesome--they made you just want to scream and bash your face against a wire-mesh security fence, didn't they, girls?

And which one was the "cute one"?
YES! YES! Oh, YES!
Oh, Rocky was the "cute" Betel--he couldn't sing or anything, but he was just so vulnerable, wasn't he, girls?

© 1984 ROD KIERKEGAARD, JR.

(V.T.R. SERVICES)
THE BETELS HARD DA
The phenomenon was called "Betelgeusemania" --and now, some rare kino-holoscope footage from the Betels' first film...
I'VE HAD A HARD
DAWN ALL NIGHT-AND IT'S HURTI
IKE A LOG-I SH OULD B E SQUIRTIN' LI


And a glimpse of the lads' first press conference...
Howard Grossmell here, boys--say, do you take druge in your coffee, Pal?
I'm drinking tea.
How about you, Drongo?
I play the drones.
(General Laughter.)
Hey, you better look out, boys--here come the girls!
SCREAM
HELP!
SCREAM!
SCREAM! SCREAM!
Isn't anyone going to ask me about me music?
... to be continued

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